

AWESOME PLAYABLE XBOX DEMOS!



OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE



SIZE MATTERS

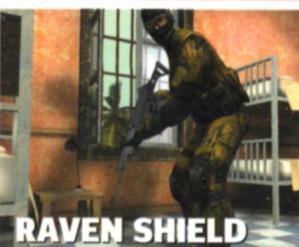
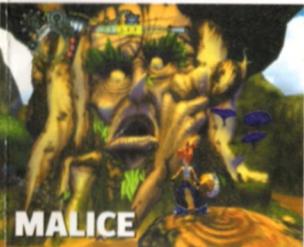
CHECK OUT STEEL BATTALION'S
GIANT CONTROL PAD INSIDE!

3 EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMONS

- CONFLICT:
DESERT STORM
- ENCLAVE
- STREET HOOPS

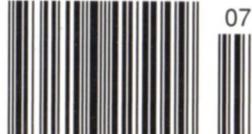
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ISSUE 07 OCTOBER 2002 \$14.95 NZ \$16.95 INC GST



07

DERWENT HOWARD

9 771446 425009



Over 50 games. With more being conceived every day.

Explore the ever-expanding family of XBOX games, such as Spider-Man™, Tony Hawk's Pro-Skater 3™, RalliSport™ Challenge



and Halo™, named Game of the Year by Electronic Gaming Monthly and IGN.com. Every game demonstrates the awesome graphics and gameplay only available on XBOX. So, stand back and watch us multiply.



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OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE

OFFICIAL

» THE BEST XBOX NEWS AND REVIEWS

PLAYABLE

» THE EXCLUSIVE SOURCE FOR PLAYABLE XBOX DEMOS

FIRST

» NEWS, PREVIEWS & REVIEWS BEFORE ANYONE ELSE

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

» THE OFFICIAL Australian Xbox Magazine is written by a group of experienced gamers who've spent their lives playing games. We believe that games are the most exciting form of entertainment there is. This magazine will reflect that at all times.

» WE BELIEVE THAT the arrival of Xbox represents one of the most important developments in video games. Xbox will not 'kill' the PS2 or GameCube - and as gamers we wouldn't want it to. However, the power and technological innovation offered by Microsoft's new machine will result in better games and more choice for Xbox owners.

» BEING THE OFFICIAL Australian Xbox Magazine means that we are in the best position to give impartial, honest review scores. We don't do any deals to get access to finished games. As a result, we're in the best possible position to give you what you deserve - balanced, objective and accurate reviews on which to base your buying decisions.

» MICROSOFT HAS no access to, or influence over, the Official Australian Xbox Magazine. The company's involvement ends once it has made available to us materials we need for the magazine, and it will only read our reviews when you do.

» HOWEVER, BECAUSE we are the official magazine, we have unprecedented access to the newest Xbox games in development and the people making them. Our coverage of forthcoming titles will take you closer than ever before to the most exciting new games. We will talk to the developers and publish the best new screenshots before anyone else.

» OUR OFFICIAL STATUS allows us to get closer to every Xbox story, rooting out the truth from the rumours and speculation. Because we can go directly to the people involved, you can be assured that every story in the magazine will be accurate and truthful.

» THE OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE is part of a huge network of games journalists across the globe, ready to visit games developers wherever they are and report exclusively for the Official Xbox Magazine World Network.

» WE BELIEVE that the readers of the Official Australian Xbox Magazine are one of our most important assets. While it's our job to provide you with the demos, news, previews and reviews you need, we want to be a place where your opinions and expertise can be shared with the new Xbox community.



What to buy first...

Christmas 2003 is going to be a bloodbath. I guarantee it. There are so many must-have killer apps coming out for Christmas, like *Blinx*, *Splinter Cell*, *Brute Force*, and *Tony Hawk 4*. Throw that together with competition from other platforms, and software publishers will be battling at every turn for a share of your Christmas cash. Bloody noses will surely be exchanged.

Sounds pretty cutthroat, doesn't it? In a product-driven industry like videogames, it's very easy to lose sight of just how young the Xbox is, and how far it's travelled. The Xbox is only six months old. In that six months, just under 100 Xbox games have been made available in the market. By Christmas, there will be over 150. By our calculations, this means there are as many games being released on Xbox as there are on every other format. Considering the Xbox's relative youth and the size of its competition, these are mighty impressive figures. Six months, and it's already competing furiously in the big leagues. Why, when the PlayStation 2 was six months old, it could barely hold water against the *Game Boy Color*!

This month, the Xbox will see the release of many high profile titles. *WWE Raw*, *Morrowind*, *AFL Live 2003*, *Turok Evolution*, *Aggressive Inline* and *Conflict Desert Storm* are games that give value to the investment we've all made in the Xbox. They are all, in their own way, the kind of games that bring both quality and diversity to the software library, which is what the market ultimately wants in a console. And as far as Xbox goes, things are only going to get better.

The six month mark is a milestone in any console's life, particularly in a market as dynamic as video games. The Xbox has well and truly established itself. The next wave of killer apps are literally at our door-step. It has performed so remarkably well in the Australian market that it is as much a fixture in the videogames industry as Nintendo and Sony. So, for all you folks who periodically send in letters and emails asking why there are so few games on Xbox, or whether it's going to survive in the long term: humour me. Have a little faith, and rather than worry about the investment you've made, sit back and enjoy your Xbox. The coming months are going to be one hell of a ride.

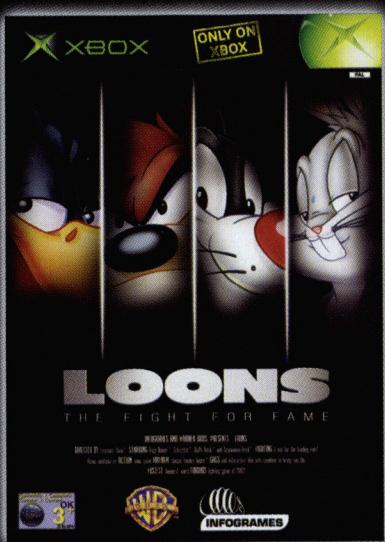
KEVIN CHEUNG
EDITOR, OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE

THEY'LL DO WHAT EVER IT TAKES TO BE ONE OF THE TOP LOONEY TUNES™



The Fight For Fame - There's more to being a big shot movie star than just memorising lines - there's backstabbing, sabotage and showing off!

It's fast and furious fun with hysterical consequences as players take on the role of Bugs Bunny™, Sylvester™, Daffy Duck™ or Taz™ and do whatever it takes to be cast by movie director Yosemite Sam™.



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HUGE PLAYABLE DEMOS!

ON THE DISC

SHOUT FROM the rooftops, *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* Game Disc 07 is here. It's quality over quantity this month, with three of our best Playable Demos ever. Dish out medieval mayhem in two huge levels of *Enclave*. Replay value is almost guaranteed, with two characters to choose from and loads of secrets to discover.

Conflict: Desert Storm is our star demo this month, and it's shaping up to be an awesome experience. The demo features four mission objectives and a large arsenal of weapons. Stop the Iraqi invasion dead in its tracks.

Basketball has never been more exciting than in our Playable Demo of *Street Hoops*. This street court game boasts a booming hip-hop soundtrack, two playable teams and three minutes of slam-dunking action.

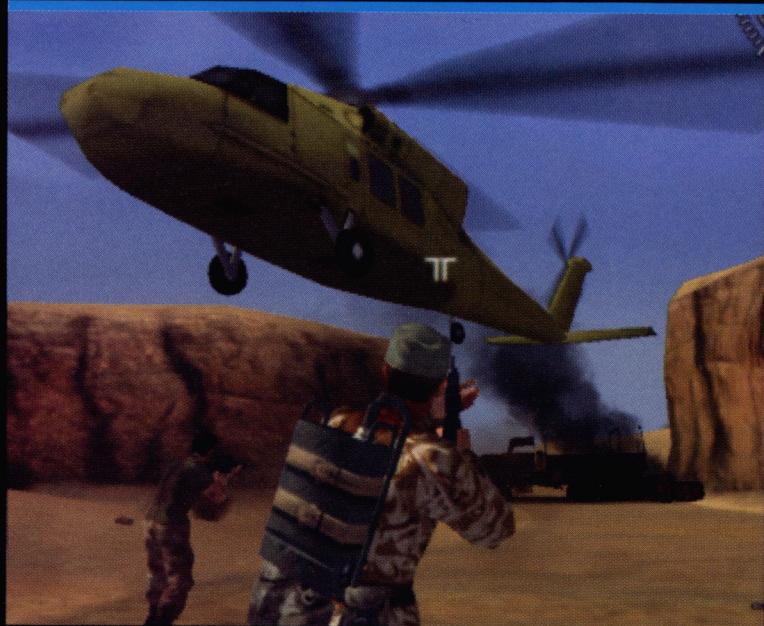
There are plenty of Game Movies on the disc too. We've also got an interview with *Oddworld* head honcho Lorne Lanning and footage of our visit to the Game On exhibition, as well as trailers for *Project Ego*, *XIII*, *Geoff Crammond's Grand Prix 4* and *Splinter Cell*.

Wait, did we say *Splinter Cell*? Yep, we sure did. Be sure to check that one out, because that's definitely going to be on your Christmas list when it comes out. Happy gaming!



The Xbox controller is your gateway to the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* Game Disc. Use the directional pad or left thumbstick to highlight the menus in the right-hand window and press the A button to select. The B button returns you to the previous menu and the White button zooms in for an extreme close-up of the screen.

CONFLICT: DESERT STORM



↑ Be a modern-day John Rambo in this latest military action game.

GAME INFORMATION

REVIEWED: ISSUE 07, PAGE 072

SCORE: 8.1

PLAYERS: 1-4

WHAT YOU GET

The very first mission from the game, The Invasion of Kuwait. Includes a large complement of weapons and masses of Iraqi soldiers keen for Special Forces blood. There's a training section in the proper game, but you're dropped right in the thick of things here...



| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| LEFT THUMBSTICK | MOVE |
| RIGHT THUMBSTICK | LOOK |
| | (CLICK) AIM |
| DIRECTIONAL PAD | CHANGE SOLDIER |
| A BUTTON | ACTION |
| B BUTTON | CHANGE STANCE |
| X BUTTON | LAUNCH ATTACK |
| Y BUTTON | INVENTORY |
| L TRIGGER | ORDERS |
| R TRIGGER | FIRE |
| WHITE BUTTON | GROUP STANCE |
| BLACK BUTTON | JOIN GROUP |

WHAT YOU DO

On August 2 1990, Special Forces attempt to repel Iraqi incursions across the Kuwaiti border. Paul 'Eagle Eye' Foley, the specialist sniper shot captured during a sabotage mission, awaits rescue. Slow down the Iraqi invasion by destroying the large bridge. With the mission complete, head to the landing zone to be removed via helicopter.

TOP TIPS

You can't afford to engage enemy infantry until you've rescued Eagle Eye. Make too much noise and you'll face an entire Iraqi patrol with a tank in support. Once Foley has been freed from his captors, find a sniping position for him above the bridge. He'll provide cover for John Bradley to steal the detonator and activate the explosive.

ANYTHING ELSE?

You could be awarded with a medal at the end of the mission, depending on your performance. In the finished game, you'll be able to progress through the ranks and be decorated with anything from the Military Medal to the Victoria Cross.



↑ Silent and deadly.

FUN CHALLENGE 1



STEALTH IS AN essential skill for any Special Forces team member.

Sneak up behind an enemy guard and attack him with the knife to earn a stealth bonus. See how many stealth bonuses you can collect.

THE REWARD

Stealth bonuses will earn you a significantly better medal at the end of the level.

PROOF REQUIRED

No need for proof, it's a fun challenge. Fun. Challenge.

RULES

Don't alert those guards.



↑ Catch that pigeon NOW!

FUN CHALLENGE 2

SHOOT AS MANY birds as you

can with the pistol. We managed to hit three. No using the rocket launcher, mind, that's cheating.

THE REWARD

With rations low in the desert, some bird stew will go down a treat with the men.

PROOF

Don't worry about proof, this one's just a fun challenge.

THE RULES

You're only allowed to use the pistol. We cannot emphasise this crucial constraint enough.



↑ It's so hot in this suit!



ENCLAVE

GAME INFORMATION

REVIEWED: ISSUE 06, PAGE 072

SCORE: 5.8

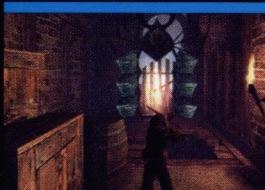
PLAYERS: 1

LEFT THUMBSTICK **MOVE, STRAFE****(CLICK) JUMP**RIGHT THUMBSTICK **AIM****(CLICK) CROUCH**DIRECTIONAL PAD **NOT USED****NEXT WEAPON**A BUTTON **CHANGE AMMO**B BUTTON **NEXT ITEM**X BUTTON **DRINK POTION**Y BUTTON **SHIELD, USE ITEM**L TRIGGER **ATTACK**R TRIGGER **NOT USED**WHITE BUTTON **CAMERA**

BLACK BUTTON



↑ He lurks in a cupboard.



↑ Don't look into the light!

WHAT YOU GET

Choose from the Light campaign, where you control the heroic Knight, or play as the evil Assassin in the Dark campaign. In the Light campaign, protecting the Jellon Outpost from the Outlanders and their wicked leader Bor'je is your goal. In the Dark campaign, assassinate the merchant Marcus.

WHAT YOU DO

In the Light campaign, fight side by side with your fellow humans to reach the top of the outpost. Slay the Orc Bombardier and retrace your steps to the main entrance where you'll have to contend with Bor'je himself. In the Dark campaign, bring Celeheim's economy to its knees

by slaying the merchant Marcus. He escapes your first ambush, but find his hiding place and finish what you started.

TOP TIPS

Collect the gold sacks. Each sack is worth five gold pieces, and they can be used to purchase weapons and potions. Some gold sacks can only be found when you kill enemies. Unfortunately there's no shop in this demo.

ANYTHING ELSE?

The full version of *Enclave* features two campaigns, 12 playable characters and over 25 varied missions. It's a massive game, and a real challenge for fantasy game fanatics.

movies

on the disc

GOFF CRAMMOND'S GRAND PRIX 4

Nothing comes close to the accuracy of Geoff's F1 simulation.

HALO: TEAM CHALLENGE

Could the visitors beat us at our favourite game? Hell no!



↑ Four-player love.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

Xbox Man takes the beating of his life in a four-way rumble.

MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

Iron Mike battles Dave Robot in a thrilling bout.

INTERVIEW WITH LORNE LANNING

Oddworld's co-creator isn't at all odd. He's a fascinating bloke.

ED, JON AND BEN VISIT GAME ON

Watch our visit to the Barbican exhibition in London.

PROJECT EGO

Your most wanted game promises to be a real humdinger.

XIII

Thirteen isn't always unlucky. Watch this stunning trailer.



↑ "Cell" shading. Ha.

SPLINTER CELL

Guns, glory and espionage. Worthy of the Tom Clancy name. A trailer packed with in-game footage, too.

STREET HOOPS

GAME INFORMATION

REVIEWED: N/A

SCORE: N/A

PLAYERS: 1-4

WHAT YOU GET

Basketball that's too hot for the NBA moves out to the streets and lights up some of America's finest and fiercest urban courts. In the three minutes of alley-oop, board-crashing action present in our Playable Demo, the Monster Jammers face off against the Ankle Breakers in The Cage, West 4th Street, New York City. This demo is for one player only.

LEFT THUMBSTICK **MOVE**RIGHT THUMBSTICK **AUTO PASS**DIRECTIONAL PAD **MOVE**A BUTTON **PASS / CHANGE PLAYER**B BUTTON **SHOOT / TACKLE**X BUTTON **EVADE / TACKLE**Y BUTTON **EVADE / BLOCK AND**L TRIGGER **DEFLECT**R TRIGGER **DRIBBLE / RUN**WHITE BUTTON **DRIBBLE / BLOCK**BLACK BUTTON **TOGGLE DISPLAY****NOT USED****WHAT YOU DO**

Pick your team and score more baskets than the opposition in a fast and furious three minute period. Play for pride and high stakes by hitting the most stylish and devastating hoops. From our experience, the two teams available are evenly matched.

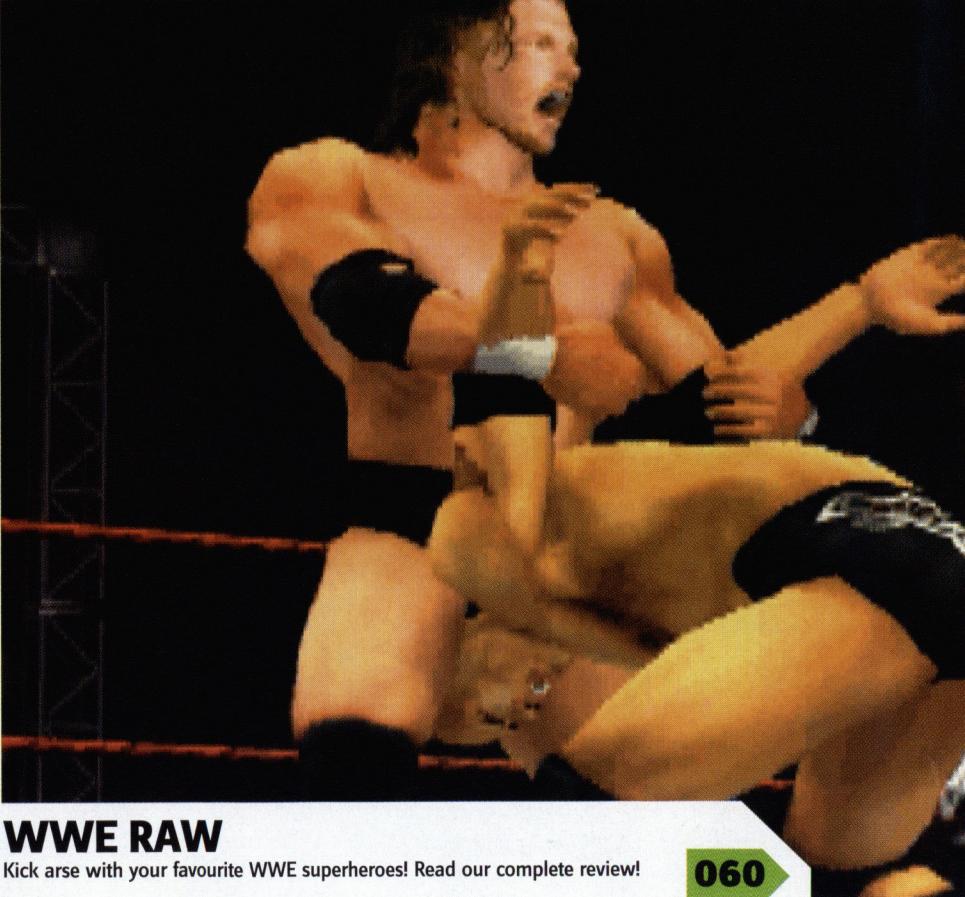
TOP TIPS

If you want to get into the street-court vibe, you'll first need to learn some slang. 'Cleaning the glass' or 'crashing the boards' means that a player is scoring well from rebounds. 'Pet that dog', or 'let it fly' is another way of telling someone to shoot the ball.



↑ Hit those hoops, Win a prize.

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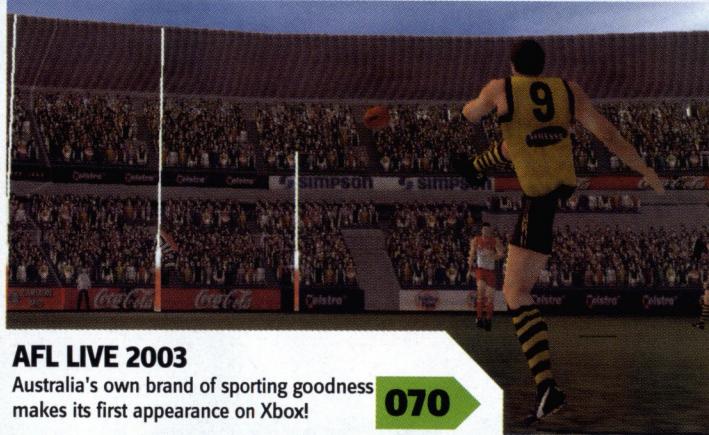
ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

You won't believe the size of this game!

074



»LARGO WINCH // 072



AFL LIVE 2003

Australia's own brand of sporting goodness makes its first appearance on Xbox!

070

ONLY ON
XBOX



HALO 2

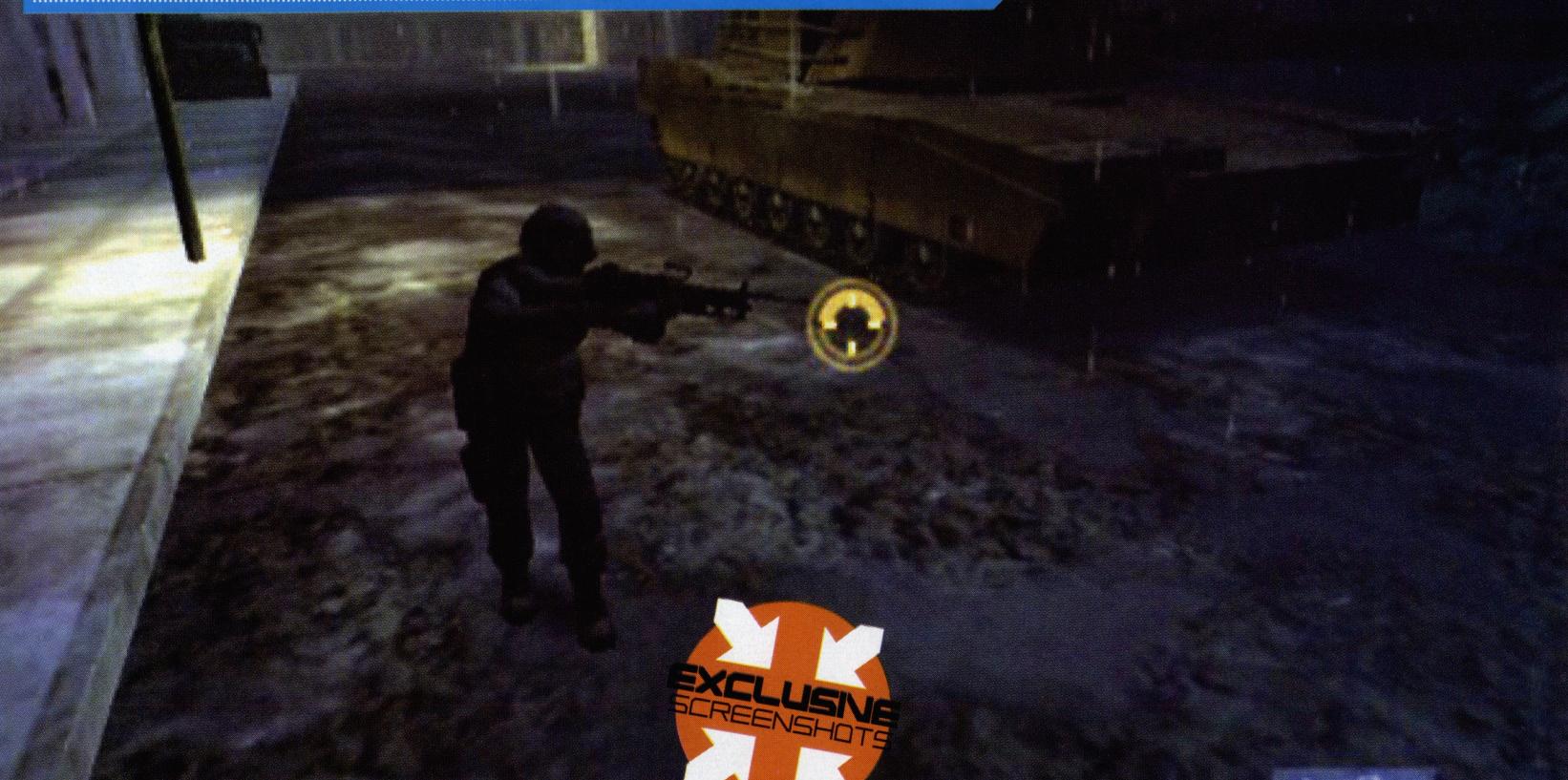
Hot new screens, direct from Microsoft; plus pics of Project Gotham Racing 2!

016

FIRST LOOK

- GHOST RECON // Clancy some, do ya?
- PHANTOM CRASH // Blue sky brings tears
- SILENT HILL 2 // Read this with the lights on

010
012
014



↑ Keep an eye on your surroundings, or just let your mates do it for you.



↑ Tanks aren't invulnerable to the hardnutes you get to control. As you can see.

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON

Russian separatists are mobilising. Take them out

WORDS: JON ATTAWAY

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: RED STORM
PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002
PLAYERS: 1-4; 2-16 (XBOX LIVE)

A FLUTTER OF excitement swept through the office when we checked out the multiplayer menu in *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon*. On it, we found three options: split-screen play, System Link mode, and *online play*. Xbox Live is coming, and *Ghost Recon* will be one of the first games to let you play alongside or against your Xbox peers.

Xbox Live is still in the not-too-distant future, though. With that in mind, we dived into the single-player Campaign mode to see if the Xbox version of *Ghost Recon* is destined for the heights that saw the original earn the PC Game of the Year award in 2001.

The action puts you in charge of the

Ghosts, an elite squad in the US Special Forces. Each mission sees six of them in action at once; you are able to switch control between them at will or remain in command to bark out the orders.

If you're thinking that this game requires a little more thought than the average FPS, then you're right. It's a bit like a more heavyweight *Conflict: Desert Storm* (page 086), crossed with the brilliant *Operation Flashpoint* (also coming to Xbox). Once in the field, steady, deliberate movement and long distance exchanges of fire are the order of the day, and constant observation of the surrounding foliage is needed.

From the couple of missions we've played so far, *Ghost Recon* is one to watch. The action takes place over impressively expansive areas, which not only look nice, but make the gameplay tense - attacks can come from anywhere.

And of course, there's the prospect of playing with friends over the magical, marvellous Internet. We can't wait, and think it will be awesome. What do you Recon?



MASSIVE ATTACK

WITH A SEXTET of soldiers available for each mission, there's room for a variety of approaches. Before the action begins, you can cover all eventualities by equipping soldiers from the large array of available kit. Once in the field, a press of the Left trigger will display a handy map of the area. As well as showing your current position, it allows you to position troops in strategically advantageous positions before tackling your objective.



↑ Pick your men and their equipment here...



↑ ...then tell them where to go using this.



↑ Some, quite literally, explosive action.



↑ Night vision - where would post-sunset warmongering be without it?

BONUS INFO

DIRTY DOZEN

As you progress through the game, it's possible to unlock 12 extra soldiers, each one with unique skills and equipment. This should add a bit of replay value to the 15 single player missions.



↑ Get down, idiot! There's a nasty man hidden in that bush. And he's going to put a cap in yo' ass.



SYS DURABILITY
DOWN 50%

PHANTOM CRASH: BLUE SKY BRINGS TEARS

There's a new kind of mech in town...

WORDS: GAVIN OGDEN

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: GENKI

PUBLISHER: PHANTAGRAM

RELEASE DATE: TBA

PLAYERS: 1-4

IT'S 2025 AND the Japanese government has built a new, domed capital city after the air became too polluted to breathe. While the inhabitants of this Neo Tokyo settle in, Old Tokyo quickly becomes a playground for Rumbling. This highly kinetic blood sport pits several contenders against each other in highly manoeuvrable mechs dubbed Scoobees.

"There are many mech games available that have a strong military feel to them," said producer Norihiro Sawada during an exclusive interview. "I wanted to take a different approach with *Phantom Crash*."

"Each Scoobee has a distinctive skin pattern, similar to the kit an athlete might wear in the X Games. There's also a Battle Royal tournament mode, which I believe shows our intentions to be different from other mech-based games."

The district of Shinjuku is the setting for these extreme battles, and as you rack

up a high kill count against other mechs in the various destructible arenas, a boss mech appears, hell-bent on crushing you into a thousand pieces. Take it down, though, and you'll be rewarded with upgrades and fame.

"I think a Scoobee's best point is its speedy movement coupled with its fast attacks, firing many projectiles from all sides," enthused Sawada.

"Gamers need to think about their targeting, as the Scoobee's versatility makes it possible to destroy almost anything on screen. It's a style of gameplay that makes everything more refreshing for the player."

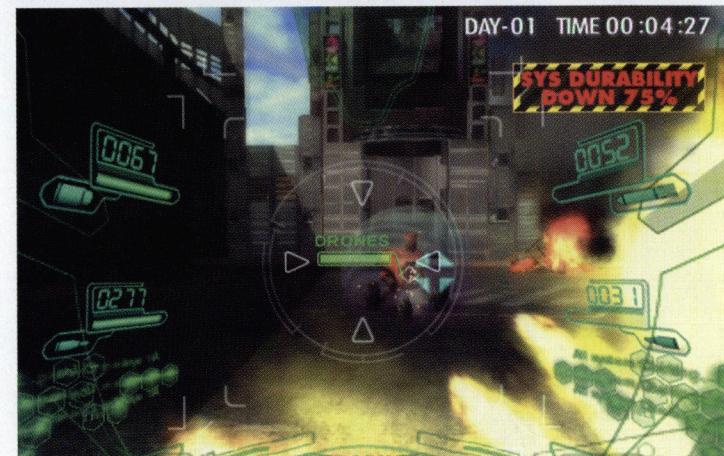
"An optical camouflage effect can be used by the player and by all enemies, which makes the game more stimulating."

And we're inclined to agree. If you thought the invisibility effect in *Halo* was impressive (and it is), then you'll be able to appreciate the fright of a mech uncloaking before your very eyes and unloading its missiles there and then.

"My graphical style for *Phantom Crash* would be very difficult to create well on any other console except Xbox," said Sawada. "This is due to the amount of polygons needed to create the curves and other areas of the Scoobee's design. Also, I think it is very difficult to pull off six Scoobees using optical camouflage at the same time."



↑ Each Scoobee has its own unique design and weapons.



↑ There's also a first-person mode for seekers of hardcore mech action.



↑ You'll even be able to find a quiet place to camp.



↑ The Black and White buttons are used to strafe left and right.

>> BONUS INFO

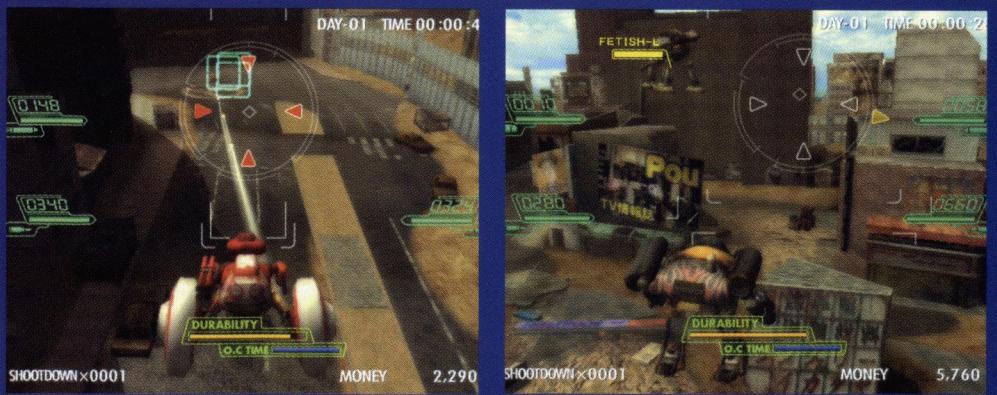
>> SONAR, SO GOOD
Locking onto a Scoobee while it's using optical camouflage is extremely difficult, but help is at hand. To counter the inability to see an enemy Scoobee, players can equip their mechs with sonar. By emitting a sound wave, it's possible to detect an enemy's presence and pinpoint its position.



↑ This bird's eye view shows that you're open to attack from all sides.

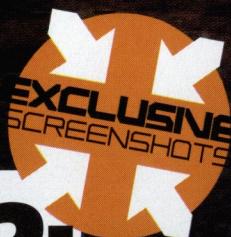
DON'T BLAME THE TOOLS

 **PHANTOM CRASH** HAS been designed in such a way that no Scoobee can be better than any other. Armour, weapons and moving parts may be different, but this doesn't yield any tactical advantage. A player's style and skill will determine the winner. The shop provides everything needed to keep a mech in prime condition. Used parts are available for those who lack cash but, as your rank increases, lucrative sponsorship deals can lead to cheaper parts.



↑ Look out for the optical camouflage effect...

↑ ...there could be a Scoobee right behind you.



SILENT HILL 2: INNER FEARS

The game you *have* to play with the lights on

WORDS: JON ATTAWAY

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: KONAMI

PUBLISHER: KONAMI

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002

PLAYERS: 1

a new bonus game has been included (see Xbox Extras on page 015).

Cast as James Sunderland, you search Silent Hill for his dead wife, who has somehow sent him a letter from beyond the grave. The town is enveloped in a thick, mysterious fog; the situation gets very claustrophobic very quickly.

The game begins with James on the outskirts of Silent Hill, in a particularly unpleasant toilet. Unhygienic public conveniences have rarely been so well realised, and the high level of detail is maintained for all other backdrops and scenarios. The graphics do an excellent job of immediately creating a squalid, creepy atmosphere close to - if not better than - the first *Silent Hill* experience.

If you enjoy a game that makes you feel uneasy and slightly dirty, and who doesn't, this is one to keep an eye on. There are plenty of nice gameplay touches, such as James panting after he runs and the pad rumbling to reflect his pumping heartbeat when he's injured.

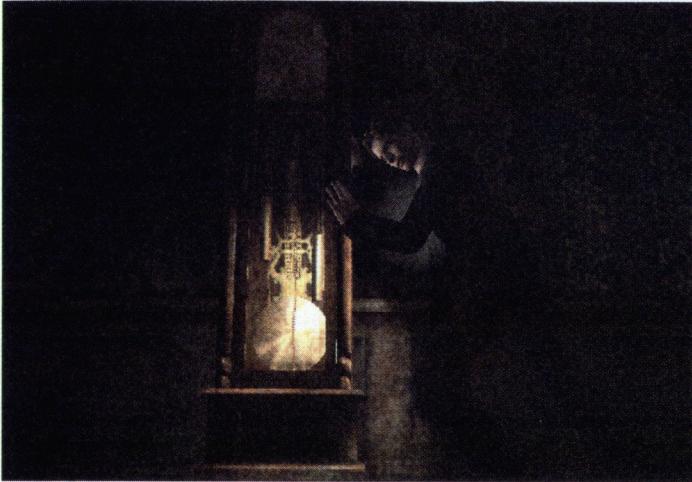
Hopefully, the adventure will be to the same high standard as the general production values. With a bit of luck, we'll be able to let you know in a full review next month.



THE *SILENT HILL* series began on PSone, offering a psychological slice of survival horror where *Resident Evil* delivered action. Set in and around the town of Silent Hill, it was all about freaking players out rather than making them jump. Silent Hill had a chilling atmosphere, unsettling camera angles and skinless babies. *Skinless babies*. It scares us just thinking about it.

American and Japanese Xbox owners have been enjoying *Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams* (an enhanced version of the PS2 original) since the console launched in those countries. In October, the unspeakable foulness of the *Silent Hill* sequel at last arrives in Australia.

Aside from a few graphical tweaks - different branding on litter bins, and so on - and a change of subtitle, *Inner Fears* is the same as *Restless Dreams*. However,



↑ It's not all walking corpses and psycho pain. Expect tricky puzzles too.



↑ It takes a while to find the gun, but once found it's always useful.

 BONUS INFO

FEAR MONSTERS

The enemies we've encountered so far are rather unpleasant. Shambling zombie things stumble about like purposeless, skinless hunks of meat, and scuttle on the floor after being knocked down. There are some nasty zombie nurses about the place too, and some strange creatures made of legs.



↑ "Everything I do - in Silent Hill 2: Inner Fears - I do it for you-ooooo". Bryan Adams or James Sunderland?

XBOX EXTRAS

 HERE IN Australia, we've had to wait a while for this version of *Silent Hill 2*, but as a small reward for our patience, Konami is including an all new mini-adventure that PS2 players didn't get to see. Intended for play after the main adventure, *Born from a Wish* puts you in charge of a charming young lass named Maria. This add-on is said to last for about two hours of play.



↑ Loads of detail on all the characters.



↑ What a fine piece... the gun, obviously.



INCOMING

LATEST NEWS // FIRST SCREENSHOTS // BRAND NEW GAMES



↑ Halo 2. This time, it's personal. More guns, more aliens, and loads of carnage.



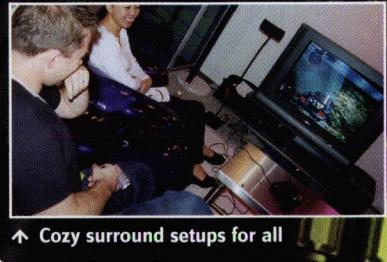
↑ Xbox Live was available to test in multiplayer and head-to-head titles.



↑ Manhattan, New York: perfect for X02



↑ Games as far as the eye can see!



↑ Cozy surround setups for all

THE BIG STORY

HALO 2

Microsoft lets out the really big guns at X02



AUGUST 8. NEW YORK. As mentioned in last issue's editorial, Microsoft played host to the world's media at its X02 event, showcasing its upcoming titles, and making a double announcement that sent Xbox owners into rejoicing: *Halo 2* and *Project Gotham Racing 2*.

Halo 2, will be a full sequel to the original best seller, continuing the story of the Master Chief as he defies the alien coalition known as the Covenant. The Master Chief will be taking on a whole new army of Covenant forces, including enemies who will be revealed for the first time. There'll be new firearms to use, a few of which were pilfered from the hands of fallen foes; and there will be more than twice as many vehicles that can be driven and piloted around to explore the landscapes. *Halo 2* will also be playable online through Xbox Live.

Halo 2 isn't expected for release until the end of 2003, so Microsoft is saying

nothing on the specifics of the game. We can tell you, however, based on a video-only cut-scene demo, that the Master Chief will be on a mission to save all of humanity. The video depicts the Master Chief suiting up for battle while listening to the frantic chatter of his comrades.

Moments later, he opens the airlock, leaps out of his space ship, and hurtles towards a planet that, from orbit, looks like it's been devastated by a few atomic bombs. When a hulking great Covenant ship pulls into view, though, it turns out the Master Chief was aiming to board it and lay waste to its crew it all along!

Project Gotham Racing 2 will feature new cars from Porsche and Ferrari, the main showcase is Ferrari's new model, the Enzo. New city tracks in Hong Kong, Edinburgh and Scotland will also be available to race in.

Download the *Halo 2* trailer from <http://halo.bungie.org/misc/halo2trailermirrors.html>.

START SAVING FOR XMAS

It's going to start raining killer apps very soon!



↑ More Kudos for Microsoft: Xbox owners will be getting more PGR love next year!



↑ Brute Force: a big Christmas title



↑ Quantum Redshift: funkier than Wipeout

the Xbox Live network, there was virtually no lag to hamper gameplay.

Shown behind closed doors was *Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus* (exclusively previewed last month), which has more than its fair share of connections with the old *Mortal Kombat* franchise. The game mixes brutality with the broad, spacious level designs of *Dead or Alive 3*.

Steel Battalion was also on show, its dining table-sized controller in tow, baffling all comers with a control system that's as complicated as learning to drive for the first time. Check out our Inside story at page 036 for more details.

And finally, *NBA Inside Drive 2003* and *NFL Fever 2003* were used to demonstrate the versatility of the Xbox Live system, letting players compete against each other in lag-free matches of their favourite sports.

Halo 2 and *Project Gotham Racing 2* weren't the only games at X02. Out in the halls of the exhibition area, Microsoft had set up display units, head-to-head televisions, and lounges with the full Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound set-up, all of which were equipped with the biggest Xbox games for the next six months. On display were *Blinx*, *Brute Force*, *Quantum Redshift*, *Mech Assault* and *Splinter Cell*, a tour de force of must-have titles, all of which will be available for this year's Christmas season.

Further down the line on the release schedule were games like *Unreal Championship*, which commanded a great deal of attention as attendees took turns blasting the daylights out of each other over Xbox Live. It's incredibly fast, and even with all the trash-talking over



↑ Unreal Championship: fragging mad!



↑ Midtown Madness 3

Headlines

ACTIVATION

Activision shows off the cream of its crop and makes some very big announcements for its Xbox lineup.

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HARDWARE IN FOCUS

Matt Wolfs takes us through that neat little graphical effect called Cel Shading, which is a lot more complicated than it looks!

020

UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Amazing, exclusive images from *Unreal Championship*. PLUS: An explanation on what's happened to *Grand Prix 4*.

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Hot gossip on a *Medal of Honor* game, plus interesting tidbits on a new *Worms* game and *The Thing*.

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Annoy your neighbours with the latest new boom box specifically designed for consoles from Altec Lansing.

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WAVE HELLO TO KELLY

Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer is unveiled in a batch of exclusive screenshots. PLUS: the latest on the Xbox port of *Lotus Challenge*.

028

TOTAL IMMERSION RACING

Total Immersion Racing slides into view. PLUS: your chance to win some gaing goodies in our Spot the Shot comp!

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BLADE SHARPENS UP

Step into the shoes of the Daywalker in the game-of-the-hit-movie, *Blade II*. Fast-paced fisticuffs guaranteed.

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INSIDE: STEEL BATTALION

An Australian-exclusive interview with Capcom. We dig deep into the giant-controlled world of *Steel Battalion*.

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INSIDE: THE THING

The developer of this horror movie 'sequel' is grilled wo within an inch of his life. It's just too scary for words.

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X-MEDIA

Mad Max, *Samurai Jack*, *Austin Powers: Goldmember*, the latest tunes for your HDD, and brand new online bookmarks!

044

LATEST SALES CHARTS

What's in and what's out? Find out where your games fit in the popularity charts, as well as the most anticipated new games.

046

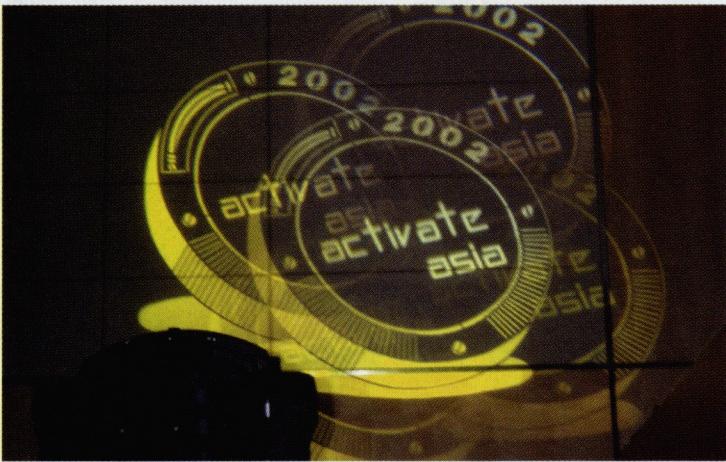


INCOMING

LATEST NEWS // FIRST SCREENSHOTS // BRAND NEW GAMES



▲ Doom III will use fear and dread to punctuate its single-player experience.



▲ Tim Willits and Todd Hollenshead at the Doom III booth

ACTIVATE ASIA

Activision holds its own little version of E3 for the Australasian market



AUGUST 5, SINGAPORE. Multi-platform software publisher Activision held its first Asia-based Activate games conference. Much like

Microsoft's X02, it's designed to showcase Activision's biggest titles for the next few months; and as the second largest independent software publisher in the world, it certainly has a large enough portfolio to pull off such a show.

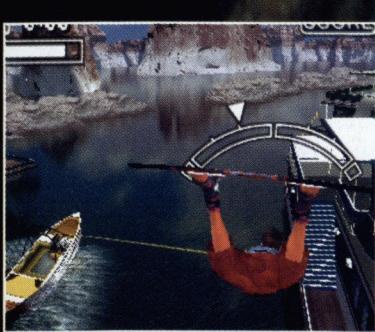
The first big announcement to come out of Activision is the Xbox conversion of the PC best seller, *Return to Castle Wolfenstein*. As a single-player first-person shooter, *RtCW* plunged audiences into a Nazi prison, forcing them to uncover the mysteries of supernatural experiments being conducted in the compound. The game earned its notoriety through its amazing multiplayer games, and it's this very feature that will be taken even further on the Xbox. Through Xbox Live, players will be able to take part in all-new squad-based multiplayer games, as well as split-screen and co-operative Internet modes.

The conversion is being handled by Nerve Software, the company that was contracted by id Software to create the multiplayer features of the original *RtCW*.

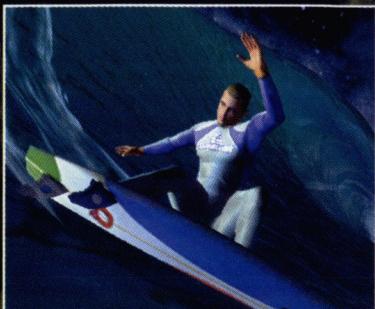
Also hot on the cards for Xbox conversions is *Star Wars Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast*. Good *Star Wars* games are usually few and far between, and *Jedi Knight II* is one of them. Just think *Halo*, but with lightsabers and Force powers thrown into the works. Although it looks incredibly faithful to the PC original. Xbox Live support couldn't be confirmed at the conference, and split-screen multiplayer only supported two players.

The one PC game that industry pundits can't stop asking about, however, is *Doom III*. Check out the screens at the top of the page: they are all real-time, meaning the games will look just like that while you play.

Why are we mentioning *Doom III* in an Xbox magazine? Because in an exclusive interview with the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*, id Software's Todd Hollenshead mused that "the Xbox is the only console that we'd



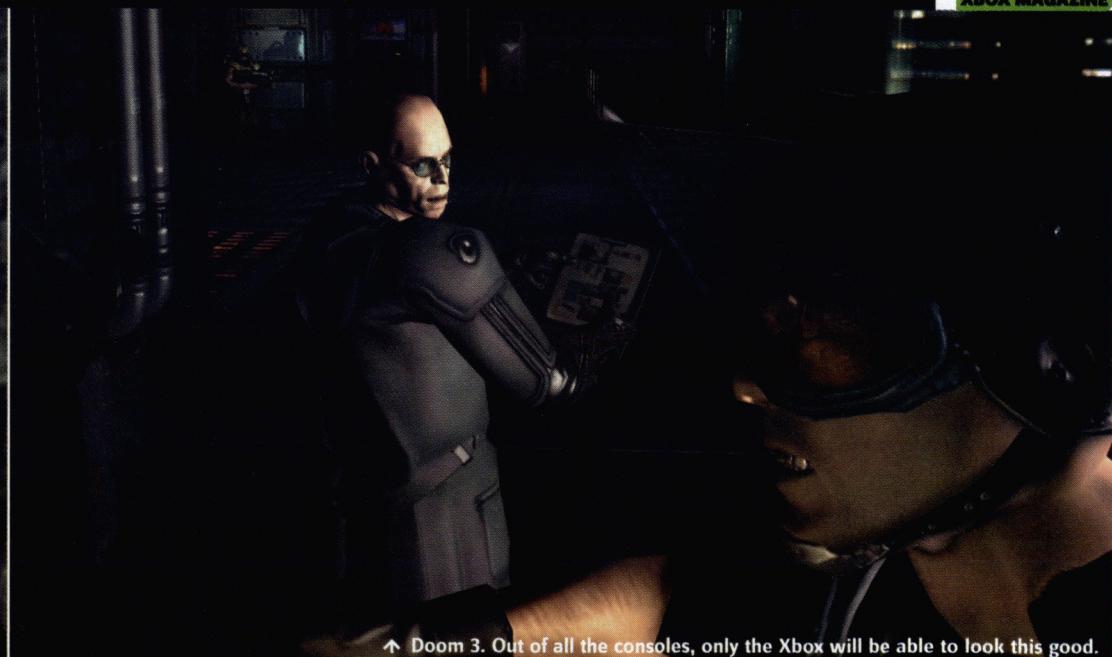
↑ Shaun Murray's Pro Wakeboarder



↑ Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer



↑ Return to Castle Wolfenstein



↑ Doom 3. Out of all the consoles, only the Xbox will be able to look this good.



↑ True Crime: Streets of LA

automatically consider for *Doom III*... its hardware is basically the same as a high end PC, so the move from the PC to the Xbox is a more logical and natural progression."

To the more familiar console franchises, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4* is going to be so much more than a simple update on *THPS3*. A new graphics engine has been employed for *Tony Hawk 4*, giving it a more coherent and edgy appearance. Progression through level challenges has also been completely restructured, with goals being presented in a more natural adventure format, rather than having a checklist thrust before you. *Tony Hawk 5* and *6* are, incidentally, already under development.

Activision also used the opportunity to promote its lesser known 'action sports' titles, particularly *Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer* (see page 028 for more details) and *Shaun Murray's Pro Wakeboarder*, which surprised us with its hybrid form of gameplay, combining the boarding action of *Amped* with the skillful tricks and manoeuvring of *Tony Hawk 3*.

Of some interest to the academics will be the PlayStation 2 conversion of *Wreckless* (Issue 02, 8.0), which looks better than anyone expected. In fact, it runs at 60 frames-per-second compared to 30 on the Xbox, which has a few of us scratching our heads. According to the producer on hand, the PS2 is able to run at such a high frame rate after they cut down on the number and quality of textures used throughout the game. For the Xbox version, by contrast, the developers went all-out to model and texture the parts you don't get to see in the game, like glove compartments and engines, which explains the Xbox's lower frame rate.

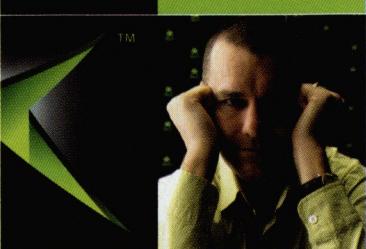
Of course, the politics flow both ways. Activision's *True Crime: Streets of LA* is a game that lets players drive freely through the City of Angels, and take part in John Woo-style gun fights and martial arts brawls, with furniture being thrown about and smashed to bits. It looks a treat, and it was made in half the time of Sony's much-vaunted virtual vapour-ware, *The Getaway*. Kudos to Activision for that.



↑ The Force will be coming to Xbox in a big way with Jedi Knight II



Inside the Box



YOU PROBABLY ALL know by now about the fantastic Xbox Halo and DVD remote "bundle" which became available at Xbox retail outlets, including our new Xbox retail partners, Harvey Norman, in late August.

That package, representing superb value for customers wanting to become part of the Xbox experience, and making the experience even more accessible, is just another step along the exciting journey we are taking with Xbox. And we are deeply committed to completing that journey, to ensuring that the purchase of an Xbox console, games and other products such as extra controllers has been, and will be, a fantastic investment.

A key to that investment is the fact that the Xbox is really the only next generation console on the market. It has the future built into it, with the high-speed broadband capability for Xbox Live, with the breakthrough built-in hard drive (faster load times, and no need to purchase add-on hard drives or memory cards to save games data - unlike our competitors) and the other powerful graphics and audio features.

And we will more than double the number of available games - in all genres, for all ages - to about 150, by Christmas, our momentum along that road is increasing.

So Xbox, with its versatility and capabilities, is already a family entertainment unit (including a DVD player); and with Xbox Live to look forward to, it is really the future generation video game system.

It is really about all of us - the Xbox team, games developers, and the all-important customers - making the most of the console's capability and versatility, with products and software to match.

Soon, we will have chalked up six months since our Australian launch, and I am very confident that when we reach that mark, we will have had the most successful first half-year ever for any new video gaming system. So happy Xboxing!

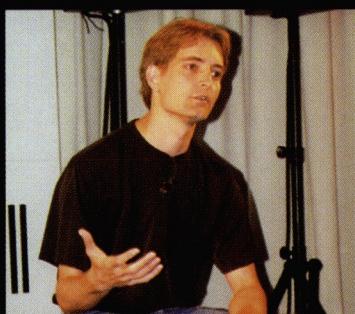
Alan Bowman
Regional Director Xbox

GAMES AS AN ARTFORM?

Ed Fries shares his thoughts on the future directions of Xbox and the gaming industry



↑ Every reason to smile: Xbox is a success



↑ Speaking before Halo 2's unveiling



ED FRIES has a very official-sounding title at Microsoft: Corporate Vice President of Game Publishing. However, his heart is still with the artform of game design. At the recent X02 event, the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* spoke exclusively with Fries about his views on the state of the industry.

"This is the Golden Age of the videogame business", he says proudly, "It is now a \$23 billion business, projected to grow at least 20% over the next couple of years."

"But it's also about taking the most creative and artistic people in the world, and combining them with the most technically skilled people to create something new - a new art form that's fundamentally more compelling than anything that's come before it."

"But there are a lot of people saying now that games are violent; that we're reinforcing negative stereotypes. And then there's this judge, Steven Limbaugh, the Federal District Court Judge who recently

ruled that videogames do not deserve to be protected under the First Amendment - we don't deserve free speech protection. He basically just dismissed the entire gaming business after just reviewing 5 videotapes of games. He never even actually played them."

"Every art form comes under attack. In music every generation has its Elvis or its Eminem, or whoever the parents are up in arms about. And of course, film has been controversial since the beginning. So it's not surprising that we're facing these challenges. I really want two things. I want videogames to be recognised as an art form, and I want people in the business to take it more seriously. And so, in a way, I want there to be a little more thoughtfulness put into them, and maybe we won't have people like this judge here saying there's no ideas in games."

On a less serious note, Fries had a few words to say about Sony's controversial declaration of victory at E3 2002 (they declared themselves Number 1): "Sony declared victory at 30 million customers. The worldwide market is about 100 million. So there's about 70 million people to be fought over. And I'll tell you, we're winning a lot of those battles. This last month, at a major retailer in the US, we actually outsold PS2 for that entire month. It's a good start. I like it when the competition is cocky."



HARDWARE IN FOCUS

Cel shaded games look cool, huh? It's a lot harder to create than you think, so says Matt Wolfs



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA Turtles. MC Hammer. Tamagotchi. Cel shading. What they have in common?

They're fads. Cel shading has officially replaced lens flare as the current graphical fad in gaming, and that's where we set our sights this month.

Anyone who's played *Jet Set Radio Future* (Issue 1, page 088) will know what cel shading is. It's the rendering of objects in a non-photo realistic style similar to cartoon or comic books. The calling card of a cel-shaded game is the use of monotone colours and a thick black outline (silhouette edge) around every object. It looks simple, but how is this technique achieved?

Cel Shading in DirectX 8 (the native Xbox API) is an interesting proposition: rendering the body of the object involves performing a normal diffuse

lighting (a light which shows that the object you are viewing is lit from a certain direction) calculation and using the lighting value as a coordinate for a banded luminance (little to no colour variety) texture. Blending this texture with the desired diffuse colour will provide colour to a cel shaded object: that is (very) basically what will give the flat shaded look to the characters and objects.

A thick black silhouette gives cel shaded graphics the final 'cartoony' touch. To render the silhouette, the edge must first be detected; and an edge is determined to be part of the silhouette if its two adjoining faces are back-facing and front-facing respectively. To make the silhouette a little thicker, a threshold test is performed on the silhouette on a per-pixel basis - the higher the threshold, the thicker the edge.



↑ Cel shading in *Jet Set Radio Future*.

This is a very basic explanation of how cel shading is utilised with the Xbox. Despite its simple appearance, cel shading is a technique that's highly underestimated in complexity, and anyone with an interest in the more technical side of gaming could do a lot worse than dig up some more info on cel shading.

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News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

MICROSOFT JAPAN GOES ONLINE

Microsoft's Japanese team has been secretly working on the development of an online role-playing game exclusively for Xbox Live. No further details have been released on what direction the RPG will take, but more information is expected to be announced over the coming months. An online fishing game is also in the works.

CANNAGE CENTRAL

Release date slippages happen every month - it's an accepted part of life in this industry. Complete cancellations, however, aren't all that common. The Official Australian Xbox Magazine received word that *Tour De France* (Issue 06, 4.6) has been taken out of the Australian release lineup due to lack of interest in the title. And it's probably just as well: it was utter rubbish.

HALO MAKES IT TO PC AND MAC

It was, then it wasn't, then there was absolutely no way. But now Microsoft has confirmed that *HALO* will come out on PC and Mac. The PC version will be developed by Texas-based Gearbox Software, known best for its work on the *Half-Life* add-on packs *Opposing Force* and *Blue Shift*. A Mac incarnation is being worked on by Westlake Interactive and will be published by Destineer. The PC version isn't due until summer 2003, by which time we'll be well on the way to a shiny, all-new *HALO* sequel on Xbox.

HASTA LA DEAL, BABY

Infogrames has scored the rights to create games based on the upcoming *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* movie. The French publishing giant has also signed a deal with C2 Pictures and Intermedia for the exclusive first-look option to produce spin-off games based on any *Terminator 4* film that might go before the cameras any time in the future. The first game based on the *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* film is due for release sometime in 2003, coinciding with the release of the film. And don't forget that *Terminator: Dawn of Fate* - the game that's got nothing to do with the forthcoming film - is scheduled for release later this year.

GP4 UNDER STARTERS ORDERS

Months of delay, but looking all the better for it



AFTER MONTHS of waiting patiently, and even foregoing the pleasure of sinking our teeth into the PC version, we were given the rather unexpected news that *Geoff Crummard's Grand Prix 4*, the game widely expected to be the finest F1 racer ever crafted by the minds of men, will be delayed until some time in 2003.

It's unexpected because developer Simergy recently allowed us (and us only) to be the one magazine let in to play their preciously guarded property.

The first thing we noticed was the amazing attention to detail lavished on each of the 17 real-life tracks. When we exclusively revealed the game in Issue 01, it was well on its way to attaining photorealism in the recreation of the tracks. After flying around the likes of Suzuka, Monza and Silverstone at ludicrous speeds, it can safely be said that *GP4* has almost achieved this astonishing level of realism.

The benchmark track for F1 games has always been the Monte Carlo circuit in Monaco. With 22 cars on the starting grid and the racetrack passing through a richly detailed town centre, *GP4* is a true testament to the power of Xbox.

We've yet to be provided with a reason for the delay in *GP4*'s release, but we'll keep you informed of any new developments as they occur.



↑ *GP4* to be the best F1 ever? Oh yes.



↑ The only slowdown here is braking.



↑ Pit crew modelled in every detail.



TECMO HAS ANNOUNCED DEVELOPMENT OF *DOA4* BUT HASN'T SAID YET IF IT WILL BE XBOX EXCLUSIVE.



↑ Drool-worthy sniper potential.



↑ In the back - dishonourable fun.



↑ Bring on the big, shiny weapons.

UNREAL UNRAVELS

Stunning new images of the 'must have' online shooter



UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP developer Digital Extremes has released a batch of new screens from what promises to be the next big first-person shooter on Xbox. We saw and played the game at E3 this year and all the signs pointed to an unforgettable multiplayer experience.

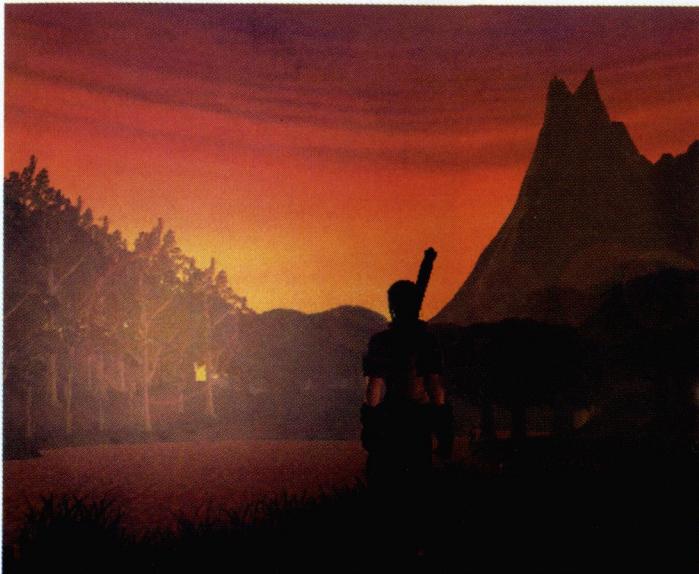
Set to kick off the highly anticipated launch of Xbox Live, Microsoft's dedicated online gaming service, the title has actually been in development for roughly two years. And, as these latest images prove, it's a game that only Xbox is capable of delivering.

Digital Extremes has built *Unreal Championship* specifically for Xbox and the Xbox controller, so there won't be any of the control issues seen in other console versions of previous *Unreal* games. Look out for console specific features like controller activated special moves and enough unlockable goodies to keep you busy well into middle age.

The thought of 16 player online deathmatch rumbles sends chills through our bodies and publisher Infogrames has told us how long we have to wait - *Unreal Championship* will be released towards the end of October. Result.



↑ Think about this again. 16 players. Online. Wow.



↑ Our 'hero' takes a breather.



↑ "Don't do it!"



↑ Attack enemies by shouting.

PROJECT PROJECTIONS

Peter Molyneux divulges new *Ego* info



ACCORDING TO LIONHEAD Studios director and all-round gaming legend

Peter Molyneux, *Project Ego* actually does have a story with a beginning, middle and end.

"Although we're giving the player an immense amount of freedom with *Project Ego*, it would become totally boring unless you know what you have to do," he explained.

"In one of the quests, the player will be thrown in a dungeon and they'll

only have one opportunity a year to escape. Mess it up and they'll be in there for another year and the character will visibly age. Obviously, time will be compressed during this section."

Why you get thrown in a dungeon Molyneux wouldn't say, but he did give us other examples of how the game will be structured.

"If you want to get married and have children you can, but you don't have to. If you do, then we need to encourage you to become a hero again

because that's why you're playing the game. We'll do this by killing the player's family off. After all, you're supposed to be adventurous and active."

In addition to structuring the story around the player's decisions, *Project Ego* will also feature a combat system that will be enhanced as the character gains more experience. As Molyneux explains:

"There'll be special combinations and power-up moves to learn throughout. If a fight takes place near a town, the locals will come out and gather around to cheer you on.

"If you run away from the fight though, they'll boo you. But that's the whole point of being a hero."

More in Issue 08.



UBI SOFT HAS SIGNED UP THE ROLE PLAYING SIM *SEA DOGS 2* FOR RELEASE ON XBOX THIS CHRISTMAS

LANGUAGE BARRIER

Why *Morrowind* is late

BETHESDA SOFTWORKS' highly anticipated role-playing game *The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind* has been given a release date of "mid-October" by publisher Ubi Soft.

"*Morrowind* is a huge and very complex game and the localisation is consequently an enormous undertaking, the biggest localisation job we've ever carried out at Ubi Soft," explained Thomas Petersen, Ubi Soft's European brand manager.

"In order to ensure the quality this game deserves, we needed more time. I hope the fans understand this and have the patience to wait until mid October." Okay, Tom, we will.

AND FINALLY...

Dreadnoughts disappears down a black hole



WAY BACK IN Issue 02 we previewed an ambitious space shooter from Xenopi Studios called *Dreadnoughts*. The game promised epic scale multiplayer capture-the-flag games played on huge spacecraft, the Dreadnoughts of the title.

Unfortunately, the game will never see the light of day, as a publishing deal has failed to materialise.

"We've been unable to find a publisher for *Dreadnoughts* because the scope of the project was quite ambitious and publishers are somewhat reluctant to take such a large risk on a new developer such as ourselves," Eric Cha, president of Xenopi Studios, told us. "We

decided to take *Dreadnoughts* back to the drawing board and redesign to see if we couldn't improve upon the project, but we still haven't decided how best to do that since it seems that the game wasn't picked up for reasons outside of our control."



↑ Never to be seen again?

State of Play



AMERICA



WANNA KNOW A SECRET?

Most people over here don't have Broadband.

Which brings up an important question: exactly how much of a success is Xbox Live going to be? Broadband on its own isn't cheap, and Xbox Live will no doubt require a little extra cash in order to participate in this service. Now, don't get me wrong, I am in no way questioning the quality of the service. I'm simply questioning whether it'll catch on at all.

The true test will come with the games. The line-up seems pretty strong with the predictable sports title entries, the simplified mech sim *Mech Assault*, as well as an entry from the classic PC-based first-person shooter series, *Unreal Championship*.

This collection of games will be more than good enough to hold the attention of Xbox Live subscribers for the first year of service, but it is really up to the titles coming out after that to continue providing something interesting.

I suggest that anyone who is considering the issue of Xbox Live and whether it'll be good value for money should do so with cautious optimism.

But enough of that. What's the deal with the last Warthog level in *Halo*? "Hi, you may have only driven me for all of twenty minutes through the entire game, but now you're required to manoeuvre through tonnes of gunfire and obstacles with my crummy controls in under four minutes, or you die! Have fun!" I was so angry. I can hear all of you mocking my lack of skill already, but I tell you it is hard! Really!

Ryan Thompson
US Correspondent



↑ Does Ryan need driving lessons?



News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

CHINA IN YOUR HAND

The general manager of Microsoft Taiwan has confirmed that the Chinese launch of Xbox is scheduled for the end of the year. A price has yet to be set for the console but it's rumoured that several Taiwanese developers are already working on Chinese-language games. Xbox Live has also been confirmed for the region at some stage.

XBOX ON TOUR

Microsoft has confirmed plans to take Xbox on the road in the run up to the all-important Christmas season. Read up on page 016 about the all-important X02 event - and expect buckets of news and announcements to come thick and fast. X01 was held in Cannes last October, where Microsoft first announced European launch dates and prices for their new machine.

COMMONWEALTH XBOX GAMES

Xbox had a strong presence throughout the 10-day long Commonwealth Games recently held in Manchester. Over 80 consoles were on display across hospitality areas and throughout the athletes' village and press centre. Gamers, athletes and journalists also got hands-on time with *Blink: The Time Sweeper* well in advance of its planned release at Christmas.

TUROK ON THE BRAIN

Five people in Europe have changed their names by way of deed poll to "Turok" as part of a marketing exercise conducted by Acclaim Entertainment for the release of *Turok Evolution*. Each Turok will receive 500 pounds, an Xbox and a copy of *Turok Evolution* for their troubles. They are free to change their names back after a period of one year. The five people in question were previously known as Ross Davison, Paul Frederick Codling, Matthew Grist, Andrew Ian Boughflower and Lheila Rebeccah Oberman, but now all of their electricity and telephone bills will simply be addressed to "Turok". Over 10,000 people applied to change their names to Turok through Acclaim's website at www.mynameisturok.com.



TOP SECRET:

THE MOLE

Burrowing through muck for the juiciest fact beetles

NEW THINGS FOR OLD

At a recent press event for Vivendi Universal's upcoming survival horror extravaganza *The Thing* (see page 038), a few of the team members were overheard discussing future projects. And surprise, surprise, more games based on John Carpenter's cult movie remake seem to be a strong possibility. Apparently, several ideas that failed to make it into the original movie could burst out in future game incarnations.

STOP WORMING AROUND

After being out of the gaming epicentre for years, UK-based developer Team 17 will soon be back in the spotlight now that I can exclusively reveal that *Worms 3* has been in development for quite some time. For the first time in the history of this popular series, those warring worms will appear in 3D. Team 17 is currently in talks with several parties interested in publishing this potentially huge game.

BIG AIR ONLINE

Word has reached The Mole's secret burrow that a very well known publisher and developer is secretly working on an online extreme sports title for release early next year. You'll be able to create a personalised skater and then take him or her into an online park to compete with other players around the world. More as soon as our lawyers give us the nod...

A NEW BREED OF HALO

CDV recently announced a very nice looking first-person action game called *Breed* on PC. Fans of *Halo* will jump for joy as the game looks like it's heavily inspired by Bungie's classic. According to my sources, the game has not been officially announced for Xbox but I'll eat my Xbox cap if this one slips us by. Look for confirmation next issue.

BACK TO THE FRONTLINE

My super secret sources have confirmed that *Medal of Honor* is coming to Xbox in the form of recently released PS2 game, *MOH: Frontline*. While the Xbox version has yet to be announced by Electronic Arts, I can reveal that the game is due out as soon as October or November. No word yet on what possible Xbox exclusive features we might get, though.



↑ Frontline in action (PS2 screenshot).



↑ Worms venture into the land of 3D.



↑ Breed looks promising but will it be on Xbox?



GENKI'S ACTION RACER *MAXIMUM CHASE* IS SET FOR A SEPTEMBER RELEASE IN JAPAN. OZ DETAILS REMAIN UNCONFIRMED.

THE XBOX DIFFERENCE

Sega announces enhancements in *Shenmue II*



THE CONTINUATION on Xbox of Yu Suzuki's epic story *Shenmue*, which began on

Dreamcast in 2000, has been cloaked in secrecy since the sequel was announced for the console last year.

Although released on Dreamcast in Japan, *Shenmue II* was never released in the US or Australia and, for the first time, Sega has provided full details on how the Xbox version will be different from the Dreamcast release.

Although the epic story has remained untouched, the graphics have been given one hell of a facelift, as the new screens show. Additional features and enhancements exclusive to the Xbox version have also been added, but they'll only be unveiled at a later date.

Many gamers pigeonhole the game as an RPG, but this description is only partially true, according to Sega, who say

that the game blends action, adventure and RPG with fighting methods borrowed from the *Virtua Fighter* series.

And you needn't worry if you didn't play the original, as *Shenmue II* will include a recap of the events of the first game, bringing you up to speed on the story so far.

Shenmue II is due for release early next year. We'll have more soon.



↑ Ryo takes his first step on Xbox.

DRIVER 3 HITS XBOX

It's about time too

THE NEXT INSTALMENT of the *Driver* series is coming to Xbox next year.

Driver 3 will be released across all formats, and it's a safe bet that the Xbox version will look the best.

Players will be thrown into a *Grand Theft Auto*-type adventure in the criminal underworld of several cities around the world. Main man Tanner will once again struggle to complete illegal missions and escape the flashing blue light of the law. He lives a tough life, that one...

A definite release date was not announced, but we'd guess that *Driver 3* will make an appearance towards the back end of next year.

You'll be astounded by all the extras.



With many never before seen bonus extras, *Monsters, Inc.* is scarily huge on DVD. This 2 disc deluxe edition features everything you loved about the movie plus heaps more, including the brand new animated short, *Mike's New Car*. Grab your copy from 30 September.

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From the Creators of **TOY STORY**
-INCLUDES-
ALL-NEW animated short film
Mike's New Car
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FOR GENERAL EXHIBITION
SOME SCENES MAY FRIGHTEN
YOUNG CHILDREN



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INCOMING

State of Play



UK

WHILE YOU'RE drooling on about *Halo 2*, there was another game announced at X02 that I want even more than the mighty tale of *What The Master Chief Did Next*, and it's not a game usually touted as one of the Xbox's heavy hitters. It's a pity that, like the original was overshadowed by *Halo*, the sequel's announcement was similarly dwarfed by *Halo 2*, because there is no game I want more for Xbox than *Project Gotham Racing 2*.

It's sad to say, but the original was criminally ignored. And let's face it, despite the extra graphical sheen in *PGR*, one of the main reasons had to be that it didn't look all that different from the original Dreamcast incarnation, *Metropolis: Street Racer*. And that game, despite being rather creative, unfortunately also had more than its share of flaws on Sega's dead system. But being so close to *MSR* wasn't a bad thing at all. As much as I loved the concept and ideas behind it, the execution was lacking. I couldn't get into the control, and having Kudos knocked off every time some CPU hit you from behind was aggravating.

PGR, on the other hand, perfected it. Bizarre Creations nailed it. They took everything wrong with *MSR* and made it right. The controls are spot-on. Kudos has been fixed. Your garage has expanded. Real cars display damage. The annoying music is out, custom soundtracks are in.

And now there's the sequel, which Bizarre have already ensured will be a personal favourite. First, there's Xbox Live compatibility. The possibilities are endless here. Downloadable cars. Create your own tracks. Oh, and that online play thing. Care to bet some Kudos on this race? Or how about betting your car? That'll spice races up.

But what's the second feature I love about *PGR2*? Why, one of the new cities happens to be Hong Kong. The idea of racing OAXM's editor online around the city that I was born and raised in is one I'll daydream about for a month or so.

Ravi Hiranand
UK Correspondent

HARDWARE >>>>>>>>

ALTEC XA 3021 3-PIECE 2.1 SPEAKER SET

MANUFACTURER: ALTEC LANSING

PRICE: \$209.95

RELEASE: OUT NOW

WEBSITE: WWW.INNOVISION.COM.AU

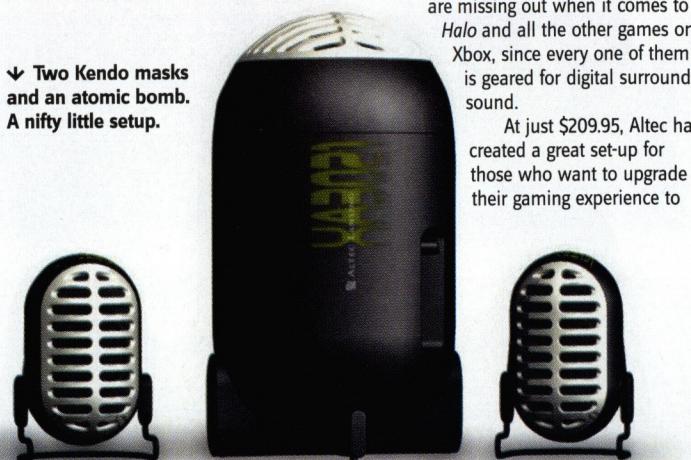


"THE GRAPHICS IN today's

video games are simply amazing. Unfortunately, your TV's speakers are amazingly lame." It's a sweeping generalisation for Altec's press release to make, but we have to agree. Unless you've got a decent TV and speaker system in operation, you really are missing out when it comes to *Halo* and all the other games on Xbox, since every one of them is geared for digital surround sound.

At just \$209.95, Altec has created a great set-up for those who want to upgrade their gaming experience to

▼ Two Kendo masks and an atomic bomb. A nifty little setup.



something with a bit more oomph.

Despite looking like a set of scary kendo masks, the three speakers convey a healthy amount of bass along with a fairly rich sound.

Anyone playing *Halo* with this kit can enjoy its rich, wonderful soundscape like never before; incoming dropships now hover in on a beautiful cushion of booming thrust, adding a greater sense of immersion to the experience.

The only drawback is that this is more an upgrade on the stereo experience than anything else. The sound can't be pumped up too much. Those who are considering investing in a serious audio upgrade will probably want to go the whole hog and bag themselves a 5.1 setup instead. This 2.1 setup is a decent compromise for those whose budget doesn't extend that far.

So, this is a quality set of 2.1 speakers, and an excellent entry point for people intent on upgrading their gaming setup to something with decent grunt.

SCORE **4/5**

BID FOR GLORY!

The World's Online Marketplace

The screenshot shows the eBay.com.au homepage with a search bar for 'Microsoft Xbox'. The search results page displays a list of items, including 'Motoren - Xbox Game' and 'Batman Returns'.



SEARCHING FOR a rare videogame? Or just out to find a bargain? Pay a visit to eBay at www.ebay.com.au, and you'll find everything from still-wrapped copies of Xbox games at a bargain price, rare *Halo* posters, second-hand games, E3 and other industry memorabilia, and a whole lot more! With over 100 listings for Xbox-related auctions, it's the best place online to buy and sell the gaming gear you're looking for.

Xbox branded products aren't the only thing you'll find at eBay, though. There are plenty of auctions running for PC, Nintendo, and PlayStation 2. eBay is also a boon for retro and vintage gamers, with table-top games, Vectrex consoles and classic 80s games from the Amiga, Commodore 64 and NES up for grabs. When all else fails in your search for that one game missing from your collection, remember that eBay is always there to help.

eBay™
[.COM.AU](http://www.ebay.com.au)



OAXM WINNERS!

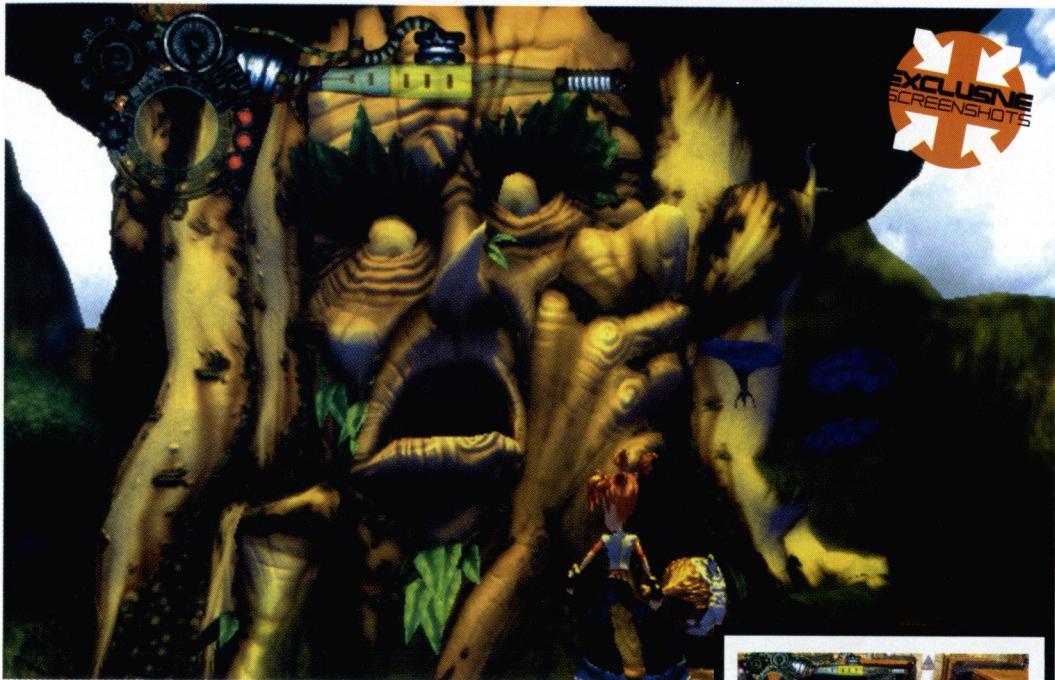
From the Reader Survey competition



CONGRATULATIONS TO Damien Van Schyndel of Mitchelton, Queensland, who was drawn as the winner of our little bonus competition that was run as part of the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* Reader Survey.

Damien has won himself a copy of *NHL Hitz 2002*, *Hunter: The Reckoning* and *Bloodwake*, but he missed out on the extra control pad because he didn't have a Unique Subscriber Number!





↑ The local Tree God is not looking his best.

MALICE

Think Little Red Riding Hood with a baseball bat

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: ARGONAUT
PUBLISHER: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL
RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002

ONCE UPON A time, *Malice* was exclusive to Xbox, held up to demonstrate the power of the console by Microsoft. Since then, the game has become multi-platform, but the Xbox version is still in a league of its own.

"We wanted to create a cool heroine in a darkly surreal, comic adventure. She'd constantly try to fix a world gone mad, only to find that she'd often make things worse," co-producer Herman Serrano told us.

"We designed *Malice* with a love of everything manga and anime. And I'm also a big fan of Tim Burton."

Since development began on *Malice* two years ago, the world has become much darker than originally planned. "The technology of Xbox has allowed us to be creative on a huge scale," said Serrano. "When we first got our hands on Xbox we wanted to do everything."

Malice isn't strictly a platform game. It's more of an action-adventure game based around combat, using a magic system and a bizarre armoury of weapons. The weapons and magic provide unique gameplay that pushes

the gameplay, if not forward, then in a very sideways direction."

The story behind the game is deep and involves everything from time travel to the Elemental Guardians, Legions of Undead and the assassination of a giant Tree God by the evil maniacal Juju Gunman, no less.

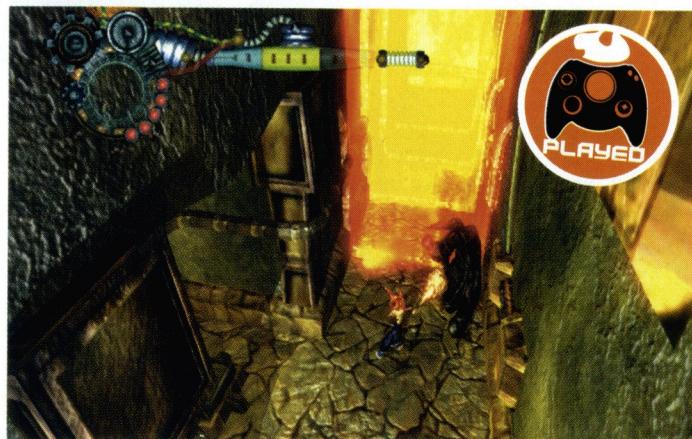
"Our heroine, Malice, must retrace her steps, travel through the time portals of an automated Solar System, and save the Universe from destruction," Serrano said. This game's been on the production cycle for some time now, and it'll be good to finally see it in motion. We'll have more next issue.



↑ It's hammer time.

WISH YOU WERE HERE

OVER THE COURSE OF the game, players will be treated to many themed worlds, each one built with a commendable attention to detail. The Orrery at the heart of the Clockwork Maze is a machine that powers the *Malice* universe. Other levels include the Fountain of Tears, the Temple Ruins of a Lunar Lotuscope, the Siren Tree and the Crow Fortress. All in all, 23 evolving environments are expected to be seen in the final version.



↑ Get ready for the next level of real-time shadows.

State of Play



JAPAN

Hello again Xbox fans! This month I'd like to talk about Xbox Live. All Japanese Xbox gamers were really surprised about the great price of Xbox Live and a free copy of *Phantasy Star Online*. I mean, 6,800 Yen (\$106) is the average price of a standard game in Japan!

At the moment in Japan, many people are playing *Final Fantasy XI* on PS2 as past games in the series have proved very popular, not just in Japan but all around the world. Yet only a small percentage is playing Square's new game online, as to do this, people need to have some experience of networks and, more importantly, the money to afford it.

To play *Final Fantasy XI* online, not only do you need a PS2, but you'll also need to buy the hard drive and have a contract with an internet service provider. You'll have to pay out something like 60,000 Yen (\$940) including the console and then have to pay around 5,000 Yen (\$80) every month to your ISP.

With Xbox, all you need is an Xbox Live Starter Kit and a contract with any broadband ISP. Perhaps the cost will be about 60 per cent less than that of PS2. The average pocket money of a Japanese high school student ranges from 5,000 Yen (\$80) to 10,000 Yen (\$160). So many young gamers can't afford to play *FFXI*.

It's great news that, in Japan, there will be 56 online games for Xbox. That's nearly double the amount on PS2. I'm really looking forward to play *Tekki* (Steel Battalion), *Halo* and a massively multiplayer RPG from Microsoft Japan. This is really exciting news for Xbox in Japan. Who needs *Final Fantasy*?

Koji Aizawa
Editor-in-Chief
Famitsu Xbox



↑ *Tekki*: going to Xbox Live in Japan.



News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

PAY TO PLAY

Sonic Team has announced that there will be a monthly charge for its role-playing game *Phantasy Star Online*, in addition to the standard Xbox Live fee for gamers in Japan. The extra charge is the first of its kind for an Xbox Live title and hopefully the last. The Sega development studio has yet to make an announcement on whether the same pricing policy will apply in America and Europe.

MICROMACHINES GIVE IT LARGE

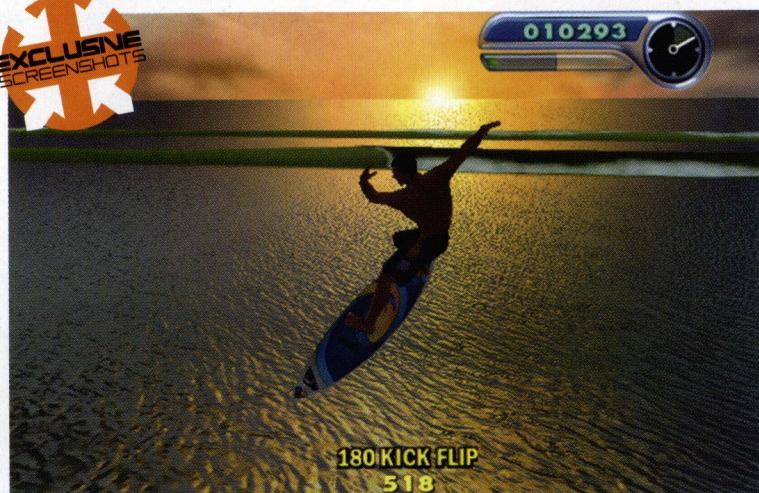
Infogrames will bring the latest game in the *MicroMachines* series to Xbox in November. It will still offer the same formula of top-down racing with miniature vehicles that was seen in Codemasters' *MicroMachines V3* and *Micro Maniacs* on PSOne. There are eight new characters to choose from, each with their own personalities, special abilities and choice of vehicles. Multiplayer action comes only in the form of four-player split-screen.

FREON REPORTS GAIN WEIGHT

The *Wall Street Journal* has reported that Microsoft's secret device combining Xbox and the Ultimate TV digital video recorder is known as 'Freon'. According to the newspaper's source, the device is likely to be an Xbox successor due for release some time in 2004. The new system could well change the typical five-year life cycle of a console and even beat Sony's PlayStation 3 (currently known as 'The Cell') to the market. This is nothing more than a rumour at the moment, but we'll keep you posted, of course.

PLAY GOLF ONLINE

Word has reached us that Xbox could play host to both an online golf game and an online volleyball game early next year. Developer Hypnotix has been discussing its unannounced games and seemingly confirmed that a sequel to *Outlaw Golf* and a new *Outlaw Volleyball* game are in development for Xbox Live. The original *Outlaw Golf* title has yet to be confirmed for an Australian release.



↑ Sun, sea and tremendous upper body muscle mass. What more does a boy need?



↑ Like, totally tubular. Tschya, dude.



↑ Night-surfing: only for the brave.



KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER

He's got a girl's name, but this is a man's game

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: TREYARCH
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 27



WITH ONE SURFING game already on Xbox in the form of *TransWorld Surf* (Issue 02, 71), Activision's O2 extreme sports label doesn't have to work too hard to

steal the number one spot. But *Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer*, like its label-mates *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* (Issue 02, 8.5) and *Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX 2* (reviewed next month with any luck), is looking particularly smart.

The idea of the game is that you're on a quest to find the ultimate wave, with the hub of the main Career mode set aboard a boat. You get to travel around the world, surfing at 27 different real locations, each time beating challenges

to earn hints as to where the next wave-based thrill can be found. Other surfers may also invite you to meet them at a new spot they've found. There's even chilled music playing as you surf, adding to the laid-back atmosphere even more.

The water effects are the best we've yet seen, and the number of tricks puts other surfing games to shame. It seems as if *Kelly Slater's* has a nice, chilled balance between surf realism and gaming fun. With the O2 label behind it, Activision is really setting itself up as a hot sporting label in gaming circles. We're looking forward to playing this some more.



↑ Better looking cars on Xbox.



↑ Improved AI makes for better races.



↑ Drive every Lotus ever made.

LOTUS CHALLENGE

Undergoing full MOT for move to Xbox

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: KUJI ENTERTAINMENT
PUBLISHER: KUJI ENTERTAINMENT
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002



LOTUS CHALLENGE WAS originally released on PS2 at the end of last year and after receiving generally mixed feedback from gamers, Kuji Entertainment has tweaked several aspects of the game to try and make a bigger impact for its release on Xbox.

Richard Mackie, senior software engineer on *Lotus Challenge*, explained just what he and his colleagues have done in terms of improving their game.

"There are several differences compared with previous versions. The Xbox game has improved gameplay in that we now have ten cars instead of six, leading to better racing with more overtaking and blocking opportunities."

Other improvements featured in the Xbox version include modified tracks, enhanced Stunt Challenges and a more player-friendly handling style. And as we've come to expect, there'll be improved graphics because all the levels have been remodelled to improve the sense of speed, as well as to accommodate the Xbox's state-of-the-art hardware.

Two main styles of racing make up the core of the game. Players can opt for a pick-up-and-play quick game or plump for a deeper racing experience where tactics and strategy play a more significant role.

The courses have been built in a variety of real-life international locations, and you'll be able to put almost every Lotus model ever made through its paces in locales such as London, Hethel (the Lotus test track), Tokyo Rainbow Bridge, Arizona Speedway and the Jupiter Beach Raceway in Florida.

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LANGUAGE & HUMOR LEVEL
ANIMATED VIOLENCE

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AND GET
IT MUTHA
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Ubi Soft
ENTERTAINMENT
SOUTHPARK



News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

OOF! - MORE PAIN, NEW GAME

A sequel to the bone-crunching bare-fisted fighter *UFC Tapout* has been unveiled without the backing of a publisher. The original brawler was published by Ubi Soft and, according to reports, did much better than expected. Obviously Ubi Soft would be favourite to pick up the sequel, which will feature a new look thanks to a complete overhaul of the game engine.

A SOUND APPROACH

Lost Toys has signed up the audio talents and services of Nathan McCree for the upcoming sci-fi shoot-em up, *Battle Engine Aquila*. McCree is best known for his fantastic work on the *Tomb Raider* series, and he also happens to be hard at work at the moment on the soundtrack for *Breed*, which is being developed by German-based publisher CDV.

ALL HANDS ON DECK

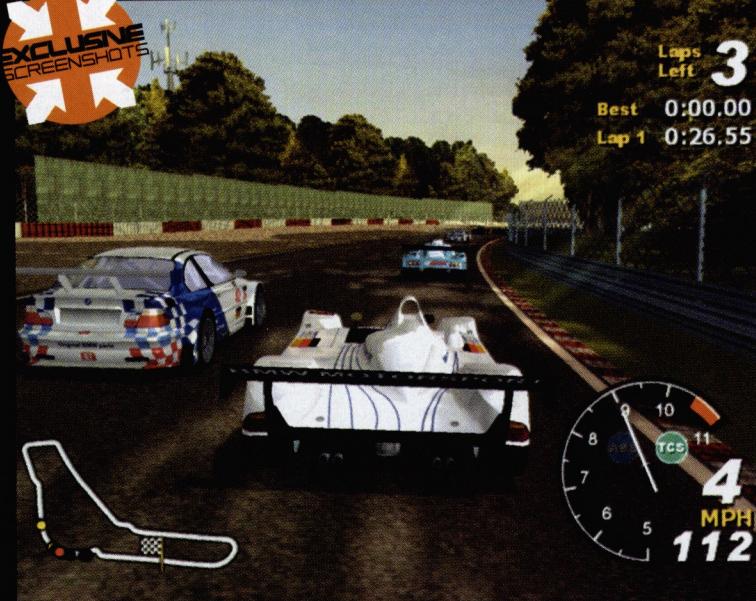
Digital Extremes will concentrate solely on finishing *Unreal Championship* in time for the US launch of Xbox Live, according to Epic Games vice president Mark Rein. The developer was spreading its resources by helping Epic with PC shooter *Unreal Championship 2003*, but with time pressing, it's good to see that it's taking no chances with *Unreal Championship*.

WOLFENSTEIN GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

Columbia Pictures has plans to bring id Software's *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* to the silver screen. True to the confirmed-for-Xbox game, the plot will follow a US Army Ranger who's hired to head back to Castle Wolfenstein in order to investigate secret genetic experiments. Spooky...

SALES ON TARGET

Microsoft has announced that Xbox sold at the higher end of its revised expectations, with 3.9 million units sold worldwide by the end of the company's financial year. Three months ago, it dropped its initial forecast of between 4.5-6.0 million sales to 3.5-4.0 million.



↑ Manners matter when other drivers harbour grudges.

TOTAL IMMERSION RACING

Cut up a driver in this and he'll never forget it

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: RAZORWORKS

PUBLISHER: EMPIRE INTERACTIVE

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002

WITH EVERY RACING game battling for pole position in the genre, each new title has to have a unique selling point in order to stand clear of the pack. Whether endorsed by a big name driver or featuring authentic tracks, it seems that the days of "it's just another driving game" are long gone. Or so we'd hope, anyway. The key feature that Razorworks is trumpeting about its new title, *Total Immersion Racing*, is personality - every driver will have one.

As you play through the Career mode, you'll start noticing consequences to beating other drivers or smashing into them, as revenge-fuelled grudge matches start to play out.

The decision still has to be made about how Razorworks will implement this road rage, although ideas are coming thick and fast. Suggestions so far include adult hand gestures when you 'bump' a fellow driver, frantic flashing of headlights or maybe ear-piercing honking of horns.

Total Immersion Racing still has a long way to go before it can test itself against the fierce competition between racers, but we're quietly confident that, should the AI model work, it will steer the game in a different and exciting direction. Plus we're all a bit excited by the concept of virtual road rage.



↑ Dare to be the best.

CAREER GUIDANCE

THE AIM OF the Career mode is to go from being the lowest ranked driver of a GT sports car to world champion, driving an eight-litre prototype race car. On the way, team engineers and managers will offer advice to guide you safely to the top.



↑ Scratch their paint, expect revenge.



↑ "Gentlemen... to the Batmobile."

SPOT THE SHOT

Clipped, cropped and zoomed in, but what is it?

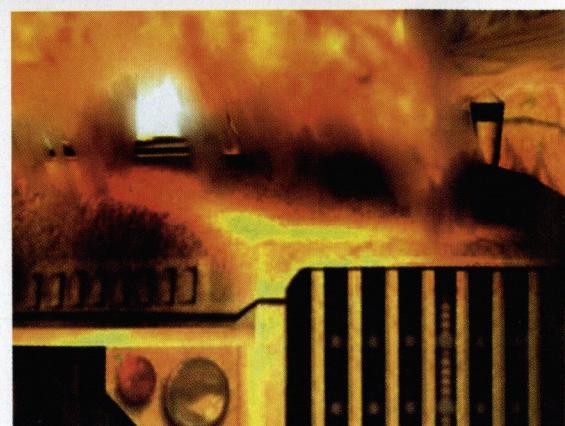


WE'VE GOT ANOTHER load of game related treats to give away to one eagle-eyed reader who can correctly identify the game from which this screenshot has been taken.

Before you overwhelm yourself with possibilities, remember that the exact same shot is printed in its entirety somewhere in the reviews section of this issue. So there's no need to sift through your back

catalogue of *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* to find the answer.

Send in your answer on the back of an envelope along with your name, address and contact number to: Spot The Shot Issue 07, *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355. Or drop us an email with the answer and your details to staff@oxm.com.au. Your entry has to arrive no later than October 22, 2002.



↑ The full shot's in this mag. Somewhere...

RALLY FUSION: RACE OF CHAMPIONS

Rally games just dull simulations? Here's mud in your eye

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: CLIMAX BRIGHTON

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002



THINGS THAT XBOX owners never do. Number One: moan about the lack of quality driving games. Microsoft removed the ammo for any such gripes by releasing *Gotham* (Issue 01, 8.9) and *RalliSport* (Issue 01, 8.5) at launch. Codemasters have *Colin McRae Rally 3* and *TOCA Race Driver* in the works. And now Climax Brighton, of *Moto GP fame* (Issue 04, 8.7), are bringing arcade-style rally action to the table with *Rally Fusion*.

It's based on the titular Race Of Champions, a real-life annual event where the world's top drivers battle for the accolade of Champion of Champions.

The game should contain plenty of authentic details, featuring 20 off-road vehicles and 20 tracks upon which to race as one of 30 professionals. A variety of racing modes is on offer, too, besides the standard rally race against the clock.

There are one-on-one circuit races based in Special Stages, as well as an elimination mode that works in a similar manner to the one in *Crash* (Issue 03, 6.6).

The last-placed driver through a checkpoint is removed until the winner remains, which if you think about it, is a bit like a game of musical chairs.

From the handful of tracks, vehicles and modes we sampled, *Rally Fusion* offers a more haphazard and extravagant rally experience than other titles in the genre. While it is accurate, featuring an elaborate car damage model, its main concern seems to be to offer muddy fun.

With its fun, arcade handling, this could be the game to carry on from where *Sega Rally* left off - which is what Activision hopes to achieve.

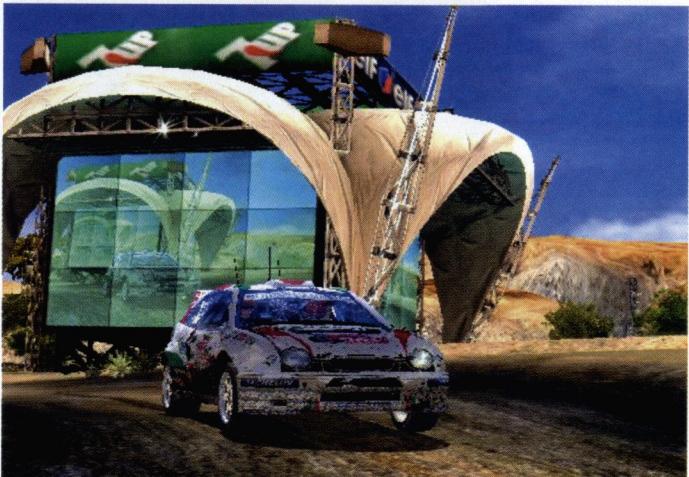
With *RalliSport Challenge* already out there, is there any need for rally fans to consider changing drives? Could it be the anti-Colin? We'll keep you posted, naturally.



↑ Don't join the queue. Push through.



↑ Pinball yourself off the competition to simplify your cornering.



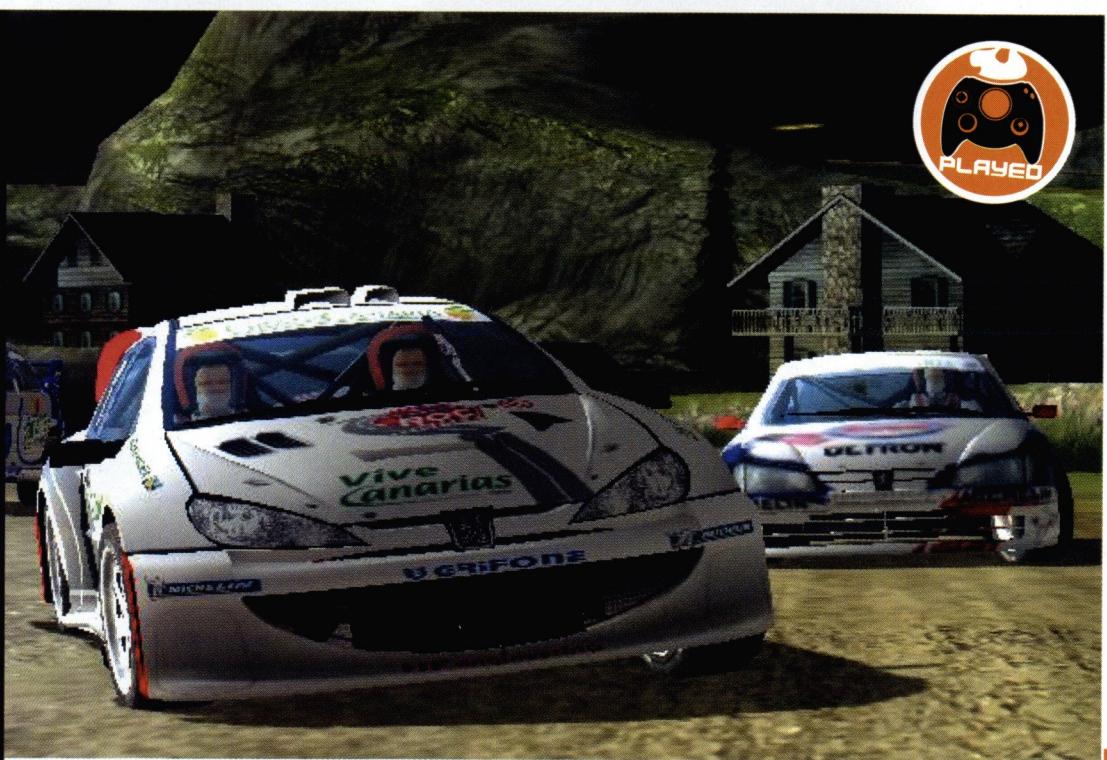
↑ The Toyota Celica, the classic rally car of choice, in all its decal-heavy glory.



↑ Spectacular action.

AIR TIME

THERE'S NO "JUMP, maybe" (the call from the co-driver when the car approaches a bump in the road) in *Rally Fusion*, since every time you hit a ramp you'll be catching a huge amount of air. If you pull off a particularly giant leap, the distance covered is recorded and a Longest Jump record will be set. Each of the races has a Longest Jump record waiting to be set and subsequently broken. There's also a Biggest Crash award, which goes to the cack-handed Driving School Maureen who totals their vehicle in the most spectacular fashion during play.



↑ You won't be seeing the races from this dramatic angle, obviously. But they will look this good.



QUOTES OF THE MONTH

“ Voice chat will enable more gamers to enjoy gaming, changing their voices by their own choice, and offer them a new kind of enjoyment not available before. Please set your sights high for the Xbox version of *Phantasy Star Online*. ”

Yuji Naka
President of Sonic Team
He's getting excited about Xbox Live in Japan... him and the whole world.

“ My character is Jordan. We did this thing called motion capture, where we had electrodes put on us. We're going to be the next Lara Crofts. ”

Ruth Harris
Model
Discussing her role in Acclaim's *Aggressive Inline in Front* magazine. Although Angelina Jolie might disagree.



top ten

Xbox Multiplayer games

Multiplayer's the best of both worlds - great games without the social stigma of being shut in your room on your own for days. Here are the best examples of the genre.

- 01 **HALO**
Still getting caned daily in the office
- 02 **DEATHROW**
Uncivilised four-player action.
- 03 **MOTO GP**
Normal or System Link - both great
- 04 **DEAD OR ALIVE 3**
Keeping reflexes in working order
- 05 **TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3**
HORSE lets you use rude words...
- 06 **RALLISPORT CHALLENGE**
Silky smooth, and very dirty
- 07 **NHL 2002**
"I can't believe you scored!"
- 08 **2002 FIFA WORLD CUP**
Reverse that miserable Brazil fluke
- 09 **UFC: TAPOUT**
Roll around in pants with a friend
- 10 **FUZION FRENZY**
But only the Twisted System game



↑ Look everyone, it's Wesley 'Passenger 57' Snipes.



↑ Bang - straight through the heart. That'll do it.



↑ Funky vampires and blood on the dancefloor.

BLADE II

Movie adaptation that goes straight for the jugular

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: MUCKY FOOT
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2002

RATHER THAN BEING a straight walkthrough of Wesley Snipe's most recent vamp actioner, this game version gives itself a degree of latitude by being "inspired" by the events of the two movies.

As you'd expect, the player assumes the role of Blade, the half human, half vampire Daywalker. But rather than falling for the big-movie-to-game error of putting the licence before the game, developer Mucky Foot has actually put a lot of effort into getting a combat system that works properly but that also incorporates some of the movie's flashiest techniques.

As Blade, you can wield every weapon seen in the film while also getting to grips with an innovative 360° hand-to-hand fighting style. This means that instead of each punch hitting only the enemy you're facing, you can take on whole gangs of vampires with special moves. A well-timed roundhouse kick, for example, could take out an entire row of bloodsuckers.

And pushing the right thumbstick in the direction of your enemies makes Blade lash out with a variety of other flashy moves, with the camera cutting to a cinematic angle whenever you pull off the finishing move.

Using the glaive (Blade's deadly metal boomerang) with its simple targeting system, it's even possible to decapitate several victims at once. When the targeting icon goes green, just let the glaive fly and watch it wreak havoc, turning vampires to the hell-spawned coffin dust they should have crumbled into centuries before.

There's much to recommend *Blade II* at this stage; we're hoping there's more by review time, which should be in the next month or two.



↑ "That was my truck, friend..."



↑ Puzzles, exploration and killing.

VAMP IT UP

THE CORE OF the game consists of three main campaigns, each with a variety of locations, missions and vampire tribes to slay. The campaigns are made up of several sub-missions, each one featuring a main objective and a sub-objective. Completing sub-objectives leads to reward bonuses. All in, you're looking at about 20 vampire-packed missions to get your teeth into, each one with a bit of brain teasing puzzle action on the side.



↑ Settings "inspired" by the two films.

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX: RAVEN SHIELD

International terrorism meets SWAT specialists - one false move and someone dies

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: UBI SOFT MONTREAL
PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002



UBI SOFT MONTREAL is a hive of activity at the moment. Besides the marvellous *Splinter Cell* (page 040), and *Ghost Recon* (page 010), they're beavering away on yet another of Big Tom Clancy's licences.

Raven Shield is the third in the *Rainbow Six* series that originally made the thriller author such a big name in the gaming world. And from what we've seen so far, it's well on the way to improving on every aspect of the previous game, *Rogue Spear*.

As part of Team Rainbow, you and the other supercops travel the world, neutralising gun-toting crims as you go with your SWAT tactics. Scenarios are varied, including a sojourn to the import/ export company that enjoys a brisk sideline in drug trafficking, and foiling armed robbers at a London bank.

The player gets to storm into these hot spots with bags stuffed full of

modern weaponry and hard-as-nails buddies watching, as they say in the world of counter-espionage, "his six". That's 'arse' to us civilians.

With only a single bullet capable of taking you down, the emphasis is always on tactical FPS action rather than the stylised deathmatch combat of a game like *Unreal Championship*.

The PC versions of the game let the player plan every move in immense detail, but things will be tweaked for the Xbox version. Said Mike McCoy, the game's lead designer: "We think that console gamers are more concerned with getting into the action, so instead of asking them to plan the mission down to the tiniest detail, we'll provide a handful of strategies to choose for each mission."

Multiplayer support still hasn't been decided upon, but with *Ghost Recon* set to be one of the first Xbox Live titles, we have our fingers crossed for a spot of online multiplayer action. McCoy did assert that "*Rainbow Six* is all about co-operation and having a friend cover your back," so we'd be very surprised if this version hits the shelves as single-player only.



↑ So many guns, so much gear.



↑ Green - the latest in SWAT couture.



↑ Every doorway's a potential killer.



↑ An open window? Bonus.



↑ Travel the world, see crap alleys.



↑ That cute little fella - he's you.



↑ The guy on the right's in the drink.



↑ Backgrounds scroll as you build up.

EGGO MANIA

Think of it as Sirtet - that's *Tetris* backwards

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: HOTGEN STUDIOS
PUBLISHER: KEMCO
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2002



ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED AS a 3D puzzle game for Game Boy Advance, *Eggo Mania* has been through a comprehensive revision process that now sees it being released on every major platform. But the principle seems to have remained the same - instead of trying to get rid of falling blocks as in *Tetris*, you have to use them to build upward.

"The best games are simple but have an underlying depth to them. Even after hours of play you can still pick up hints and tips that make things just that little bit easier," said producer James Stewart, and after playing, we agree with him.

After a few rounds, it became clear that *Eggo Mania* has more depth than *Tetris*. It's packed with a variety of pickups that simultaneously make your life easier while giving your opponent a hard time. Just the way we like it.

Each round starts with the player at the bottom of the level, with several rows of blocks already in place and a water level just above the bottom of the screen. Blocks start falling from the top of the screen soon after the level starts; players catch them and then position them to make complete rows. The first to build up a tower, wins the round. But you've got to make sure that the water doesn't rise high enough to engulf you, otherwise it'll be game over.

The game looks easy, yet at the same time it will end up fiendishly tricky. Like we said, it's sort of like *Tetris*, only backwards.



IN MY OPINION

"Good Cop, Bad Cop"

THE XBOX IS DOING well in Australia. All it took was a massive advertising campaign, heavy price cuts and a bundle that includes Halo and the "optional" DVD pack. With Xbox Live on the way, this Christmas may even see the big black brick outsell the PS2. This is great news for the industry, and great news for everyone who's put their heart and soul into making it a success.

But is it great news for you, dear readers? Perhaps not. For while the name has not featured heavily in the advertising, this is a console that belongs to Microsoft, a company that has used its dominance in one market to leverage its way into the next. First operating systems, then applications, and now games. It's an established, highly successful business technique, and it progresses in two clearly defined stages.

At first, the firm makes their product as attractive as possible to consumers. It will slash prices to well below cost, even to zero, if possible (Eg. Internet Explorer). It will market itself far and wide, be ruthless at the business end, and tolerate losses for years, until the competition is marginalised, or preferably, extinct.

Then phase two begins. This is the part where Microsoft does whatever it likes. With the consumer utterly dependent on the sole supplier, prices go up, reliability goes down, and privacy goes out the window. Monopolies have existed in the console market before, and they all spelt woe for the buying public. So even if Sony is on the back-foot, don't wish them away just yet. It's best for all of us if Xbox is playing "good cop."

Sharaz Jek is an independent journalist. His views do not necessarily reflect those of Official Australian Xbox Magazine.

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE

D&D RPG looking A-OK

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: SNOWBLIND STUDIOS
PUBLISHER: VIRGIN INTERACTIVE
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2002



"IF YOU DON'T know anything about *Dungeons & Dragons*, you can still play the game as well as someone very familiar with it," says Kevin Osburn, producer of *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*. And that's probably one of the most appealing things about the game, as it's a two-player RPG that offers action and adventure without swamping you with more menus than the *Good Food Guide*.

Released several months ago on the PlayStation 2, it achieved decent reviews and deserved success, being one of the best looking PlayStation 2 games around. So what new features will see the light of day in this new Xbox version?

"Developing for Xbox will allow us to do some things that we were unable to do with the PS2 version. Environmental bump mapping to improve the water effects within the game, for instance. We are also



↑ Flash. Kills all known orcs dead.



↑ Playing her part in your quest.

ONCE UPON A TIME...

FROM THE FEW levels we've played, things are looking promising. In the opening few moments in the tough city of *Baldur's Gate*, you're battered and robbed by a gang of thugs. Bloody and penniless, you take refuge in a nearby ale house, where the barmaid (buxom, naturally) offers you cash for clearing the infestation of giant rats out of the cellar. It's a quest that teaches you the basics of combat. Complete this job, and she'll hand over the key to the sewers. And who knows where these miles of stinking tunnels might lead...

↑ Being assaulted by only two enemies is a rare sight in *Baldur's Gate*. Although, this pair do look a bit tough..

it's

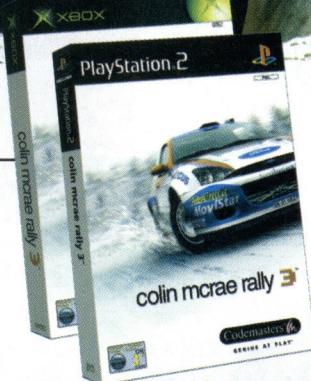
what

lies

ahead

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GENIUS AT PLAY™



▲ The stunning cockpit view from inside a Vertical Tank.

INSIDE: STEEL BATTALION

The nuts and bolts of making a mech monster



ATSUSHI INABA IS a producer at Capcom's Production Studio 4, in charge of creating the stunning mech world that is *Steel Battalion*. We've all seen mech games before on a variety of platforms but none has ever come close to the visual style and sheer scope of Capcom's latest Xbox project. And then there's that huge 40-button controller...

Specific Australian release and price details on the game/controller bundle have yet to be announced, but that didn't stop producer Atsushi Inaba from spilling the beans to us.

Official Australian Xbox Magazine: Giant robots are one of the most popular icons in Japanese entertainment. How do you think that the rest of the world views them?

Atsushi Inaba: Obviously there's a solid market around the world for fans of giant robots, but *Steel Battalion* is something we wanted to introduce as a brand new genre with a new sensation. We're not really following existing mech games of the likes of *Virtual On* or *Armoured Core*.

OAXM: *Steel Battalion's* design is strikingly futuristic yet it looks almost plausible. What was the inspiration?

AI: Firstly, robots in anime or other games - heroic or realistic types - didn't influence us because we didn't want to have something that looks familiar. So we referenced various tanks and industrial vehicles, like tractors and bulldozers, and expanded from those.

But at the same time we still wanted the Vertical Tanks to have an

aspect of coolness about them. There will be a variety of weapons specifically geared to the VT you're piloting, but you have to buy them as the game progresses.

We don't actually expect all gamers to like the style, but we want to appeal to the kind of people who like their games to have an edge.

OAXM: The controller is one of the most impressive peripherals we've ever seen. What was the reaction from Microsoft when you suggested making such a huge and very different pad?

AI: We started working on the game without giving exact details to management or Microsoft.

Of course we did say that it would use a specific controller, and at the time I just said we are going to use a controller which features several buttons. That was about it. So we kind of sneaked it in there.

We made a mock-up but it was just for ourselves. When management finally saw it, everyone was surprised at first, but they thought it would be interesting.

Some of them did worry about it in terms of business, but they liked the game, so it got the green light on the strength of that.

OAXM: How did you approach development of the controller and deciding what functions to include?

The goal was to have a mixture of both essential and fun functions. I just wanted the controller to have a lot of switches so people can enjoy watching others play.

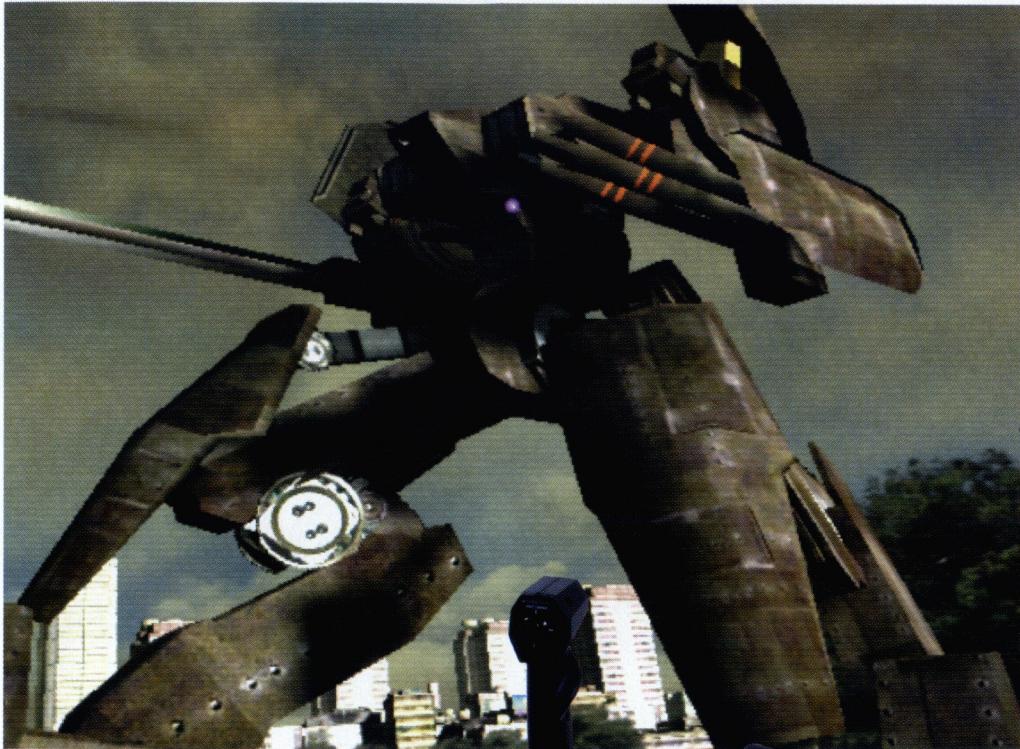
The fun part would have to be the switches that are only used to start up the various systems in the VT. They are useless for everything else, but we thought it would be a good sensation to have and interesting for the game.

OAXM: Are you worried that the size and price of the controller might put some people off buying the game?

AI: Quite the opposite. We want people who really like mech games to buy *Steel Battalion*. We didn't want to compromise on the experience, so it's not really targeted at mass-market gamers.

OAXM: How many missions are there and what different locations can we expect in the game?

AI: In total, there'll be about 23 missions to play through. For example, you'll



↑ Look at the size of that!

attack from the sea, land on a beach and have to secure certain areas. Another situation is that you have to make it to the top of a mountain where the enemy is based. There's also a military dock where you have to engage with warships.

Overall, if you put the maps together, the area it would cover comes to about 40-50 square kilometres.

OAXM: Will battles involve any interaction from NPCs?

AI: For the first round, you're part of a squad and have to follow the leader. If you don't, the team will just keep on



moving and complete the mission without you, so you must try to keep up with the pace as well as following orders.

In the second round, you'll become squad leader and it's your job to direct the platoon. Communications will be a key factor in this game. You give orders by tuning to the correct radio frequency

of your supporting units to issue orders via an onscreen command menu.

If you need additional items such as weapons from another party, you'll also have to tune into the appropriate frequency. If you can't establish communications in this game, you're really going to have a hard time and get scrapped.

OAXM: Can you give us some examples of the weapons available to the player?

AI: We're approaching the weapons realistically. You won't find flashy missiles that swirl around in this game. Of course there will be some cool heavy artillery, including some that fire six huge rounds at once.

The team researched the topic by reading military and weapons-related magazines. They also went to military training exercises to see how tanks manoeuvred and fired.

OAXM: How would the game look if it were created on another console such as PlayStation 2 or GameCube?



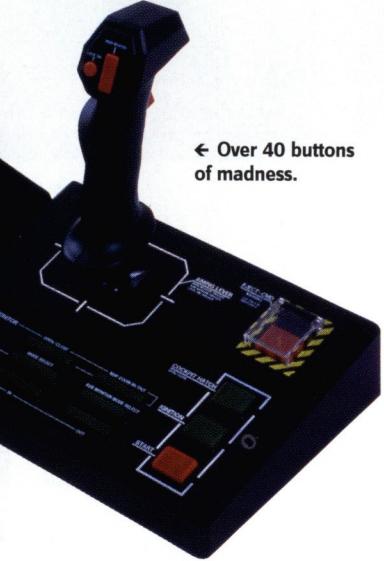
↑ That little button on the right makes the tea.



↑ A VT can strike at any range.



↑ It gets interesting with night vision.



← Over 40 buttons of madness.

AI: It's really hard to say because each platform has its good points regarding what it can achieve. I wouldn't know how the game would look if we developed it for PS2. The quality may be similar, but the tone would be different. We developed this for Xbox and we couldn't guarantee that a PS2 version would have the same graphics. Obviously, the graphics capability on Xbox is very powerful.

OAXM: Are there any particular effects or technical features you're proud of?

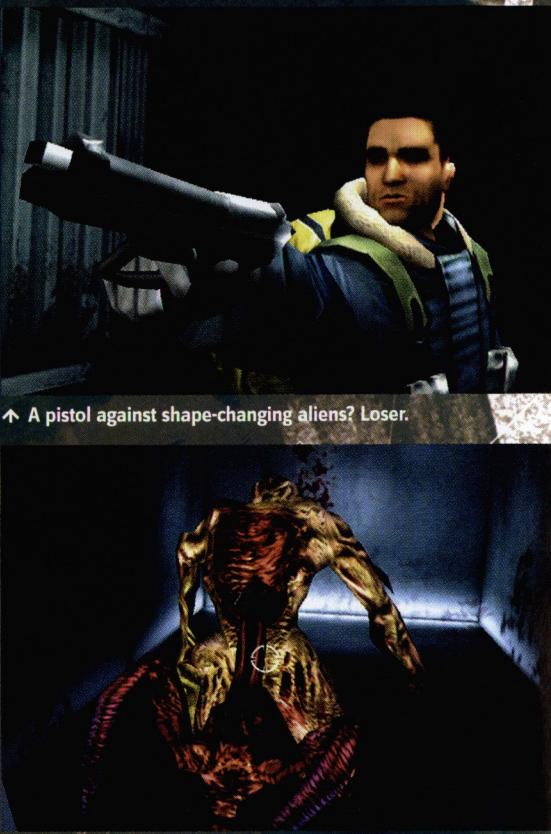
You can really notice the dirt, sand and dust in the air in this game on Xbox. It really gives you a sense of fighting a war in a harsh climate. That was really well done, I don't think any other companies can reproduce it and I'm really proud of the designer and programmer.



INCOMING



↑ In the movie, shooting at the Thing merely wasted valuable running time.



↑ A pistol against shape-changing aliens? Loser.

↑ One Thing leads to another.

INSIDE: THE THING

Horror classic gets the full gore Xbox treatment

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: COMPUTER ARTWORKS

PUBLISHER: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2002

PLAYERS: 1

COMPUTER ARTWORKS has been working on *The Thing*, the biggest game in its history, for over two years now, trying to buck the trend of games based on movies (in this case, a cult classic) failing to live up to the quality of their source material. Indeed, such is the track record that we automatically expect the worst every time a new game based on a Hollywood blockbuster is announced.

From the looks of it, though, the developer is on to a winner. Created

with John Carpenter's blessing, it takes all the themes of his movie – an Antarctic setting, a band of scientists and, most importantly, a shape-shifting alien that assumes the appearance of the people (or dogs) that it kills.

Here, senior producer Chris Hadley speaks openly about the game for the first time and how he and his team are facing the challenges of living up to a cult classic, while at the same time pushing gaming in a new direction.

Official Australian Xbox Magazine: Creating a game based on *The Thing* must have been a project any developer would have jumped at. Why was Computer Artworks chosen?

Chris Hadley: Basically, Universal got in touch with us and said they had a



↑ Things heat up.



↑ Fire kills Things. Fire good.

strong licence that could work well with our vision of evolving monsters. Our first game was *Evolva* on PC and Universal liked the idea of having creatures evolve as the game progresses, which obviously had certain similarities with *The Thing*. They also liked our *Organic Art* screensavers.

OAXM: How do you continue the story of a film that's over 20 years old?

CH: Well, we don't recap on the film itself too much. The whole idea of having the licence is that we wanted to take the essence of the film and put it in a game. The player goes back to the Antarctic base to find out what happened because nobody on the mainland has a clue about the events seen in the film.

As the game progresses, you'll find out bits and pieces that start to tell the story of what happened. Cut scenes are the main way the story will be told, but information about what originally happened can be found on several computers around the base.

The opening of the game, in the Antarctic, is what you'd expect if you know the film. From about level five onwards, the whole game starts changing and from about level six onwards the storyline goes off in a completely different direction. We make the game our own from there, still retaining the essence of the film in terms of trust, fear and paranoia.

OAXM: Has the game changed much over the course of its development?

“THE GAME RETAINS THE FILM'S SENSE OF FEAR AND PARANOIA”



↑ This Thing could tear us apart.

"JOHN CARPENTER PLAYS A CAMEO AS A CENTRAL CHARACTER WHO GETS KILLED EARLY"



↑ If the fire doesn't kill you, the cold will.

Carpenter's actually in the game now as well. He plays a cameo role as one of the central characters who's only in it for a short time before he gets killed. He loved the idea that the main bad guy kills him.

OAXM: What pressures were you under from such a big project?

CH: The movie has a huge cult following; it's an awesome film. Right from the beginning, we were very concerned with making sure that we didn't screw this up because there are a lot of licences out there that have already been ruined by poor games.

The normal rule of thumb is that you take the licence and walk the player through the events of the film, with the player controlling the central character.

Well, we threw that approach right out of the window, which is why the game starts where the film left off.

We then looked at all the big parts of the film and asked ourselves "could we do it well enough to match up to the film?" And it had to make sense in an interactive environment. The film is very slow and atmospheric, which wouldn't translate well into an interactive experience - it's impossible to walk around for 20 minutes without anything really happening in a game.

We looked at the essence of the film and we liked the paranoia, trust and fear elements. We then decided that these would be the foundations of our game. Not all of the game is based in the camp, though. You start off by going to the ruined base seen in the film but you progress to new areas.

OAXM: What different kinds of enemies are in the game?

CH: There are three different classes of the Thingbeast and several varieties within each class. The smallest are little things that run around on the floor called Scuttlers. Then we have bigger foes known as Walkers, and then there are the Ruptures. This latter type is the biggest Thingbeast and is fought in an enclosed arena as you'd



↑ "Well I know I ain't the alien..."



↑ Things ain't what they used to be.



↑ "Swap you my parka for your gun."

Is what you're seeing now what you originally set out to create?

CH: Yes and no. We're really happy with the trust and fear stuff - that really worked out the way we wanted it to. The only real difference between this and what we wanted to make is just the reality of making games; namely time constraints.

There were plenty of extra elements that we wanted to get in there, but in the end, we just ran out of time. Originally, members of the player's team had trust and fear mechanics just like you, but this was just hideously complicated and a nightmare to do. We pretty much just ended up with a squad that ran off and did whatever they wanted. It sounded great in theory, but didn't work.

OAXM: How has John Carpenter been involved in development?

CH: He was brought in pretty late in the day and we did that on purpose because we wanted to make sure the game was pretty much finished before he saw it. He's seen it a few times and is really happy with it. We feel that this is the sequel to the film and we talked to him about that and he's quite happy to go along with it, which is great for us.

fight a boss character. The player needs to kill the Rupture before they can move on.

As you go through the game, you'll see some enemies that you've already seen, but it might have a different way of attacking you, offering up a different challenge. A Scuttler might have a tentacle that it will attack you with, but further on in the game you might see something that appears to be the same but it has a birthing sack that gives birth to more Scuttlers. It's a different challenge because, if you don't kill it quickly, there'll be a lot more Scuttlers to deal with.

OAXM: How long will the game be?

CH: Well, it's not like it's got seven million levels or anything, but it's pretty big in the sense that it has new elements that'll take time to get used to and the challenges are new. It's a different way of playing. You don't have to worry about you, the player, so much, but you do have to think about your team. For example, if your engineer dies or becomes infected with the Thing virus, it's game over since you'll need his skills to progress any further. Basically, you need your team in a sound state of mind to finish the game.



INCOMING



↑ A solid chest shot is often the most effective way to take someone down.

EXCLUSIVE
SCREENSHOTS



↑ It pays to be flexible.

SPLINTER CELL

Skulking in the shadows, we glean more precious info on this stealthy stunner

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: UBI SOFT MONTREAL

PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2002

AFTER E3, AND more importantly our Exclusive Access last issue (six pages unfurling from page 042), it's likely you're looking forward to *Splinter Cell* as much as we are. Frankly, Sam Fisher (the game's shade-loving hero) is so stealthy he could creep up on Solid Snake and give him a wedge before silently attaching a 'kick me' sign to the hapless operative's back. And all before the *Metal Gear* man has a chance to fire up his Codec.

Mathieu Ferland and Steve Dupont, respectively producer and lead animator of *Splinter Cell*, spent an afternoon at our plush penthouse office showing us the latest version of the game. We saw a

whole new level, some new gadgets and extra polish compared with the E3 build we've been playing since May.

The new level is the second part of the first mission. Accordingly, Ferland pointed out that "this mission is more about showing the player how Sam's moves work, rather than fiddling about with gadgets".

One such move is forcing certain characters to help you under duress; another is the method of hiding in narrow corridors (see Legs Akimbo, above).

Hiding in the rafters while an unsuspecting guard passes beneath sums up the thrill of playing *Splinter Cell*. The emphasis is firmly on using Fisher's environment and equipment imaginatively to stay out of sight, rather than out-and-out killing.

Watching a guard walk right past you and escaping detection already feels extremely satisfying, and Ubi Soft's plan is to ensure that there's as much skill in



↑ A corridor of uncertainty.

not getting seen as there is in using weapons and gadgets effectively.

With 11 missions set to form the final release, making a total of 24 levels, players must be skilled in each and every area of covert operations to succeed.

"We've tried to create a wide variety of environments," enthused Ferland, "and different missions prioritise different abilities. Some are about negotiating the environment properly, while others are



↑ Making intelligent use of shade.

about challenging the player to find an effective strategic approach to a situation."

Sounds good to us. Even more enticing for stealth addicts is the fact that each mission can be beaten without killing an enemy. All except for one, as Ferland explained: "We thought most players would appreciate the opportunity to put their gun on full auto, so there is one mission where you have to take down all of the enemies."

SAY 'CHEESE!'

You're on candid camera...

Remember the brilliant sticky camera we showed you last month? The surveillance device fired from Fisher's main gun, the F2000? At the bottom of page 043? Of course you do. There's now a variant of it that works in a cunning and amusing way. It's fired at a wall in the usual manner and, once there, the fun begins.



↑ The camera emits a strange whistle, causing the guard to investigate.



↑ When he's nearby, it releases a cloud of nasty gas right in his face...



↑ ...making him drop to the floor, sleeping like a baby, and easy to pass.



↑ Night vision has never looked this good before. So make good use of it, my friend.

One of the most exciting new gadgets for us was the excellent new sticky camera (see *Say 'Cheese!*, above). Another is the intriguing lock-picking device. When Sam attempts to pick a lock, a diagram of the internal mechanism appears.

Using the analogue stick, the player must fiddle about and listen carefully. When part of the lock is correctly moved into place, the sound stops and the tumbler inside the lock falls.

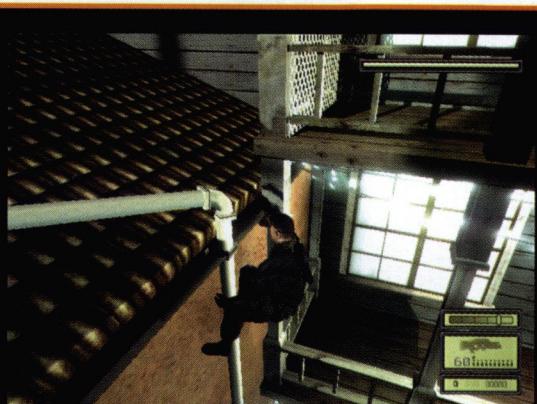
It's a great idea that brilliantly imitates the real process of lock picking (we would imagine). "But it takes a bit too long at the moment," Dupont explained, "so we need to fiddle with it so it ends up as much fun as possible."

As *Splinter Cell* nears completion, the team is concentrating on bringing the frame rate up to speed and making sure that the environment is as consistent as possible. Every door will open, and everything should react to your bullets, making the game world feel as convincing as it looks.

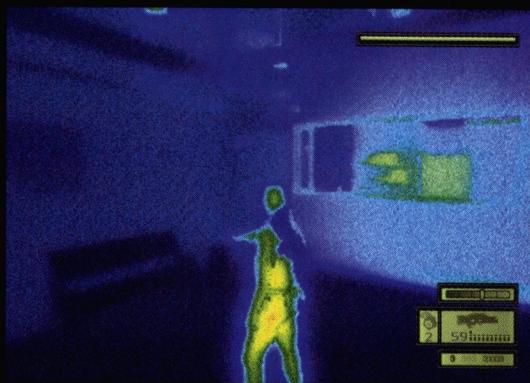


↑ This flaming building is in one of the early missions.

Not that we weren't already very excited by the prospect of sampling the delights of *Splinter Cell*, but the added fluidity and polish of this latest build leads us to conclude that it's on course to be something really rather special. Come on November, get a bloody move on!



↑ He gets everywhere, does Sam Fisher.



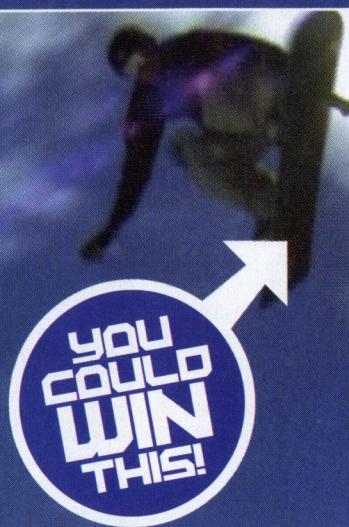
↑ The thermal effects are looking superb.



↑ "Keep your head down, son. Stay out of trouble."



FREE STUFF!



WIN AN EXCLUSIVE XBOX PROTEAM SNOWBOARD

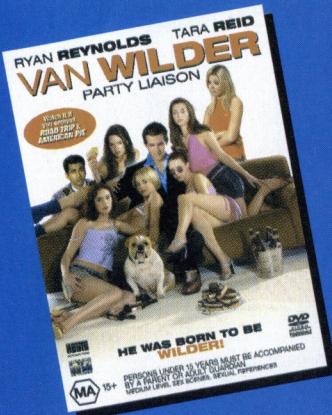
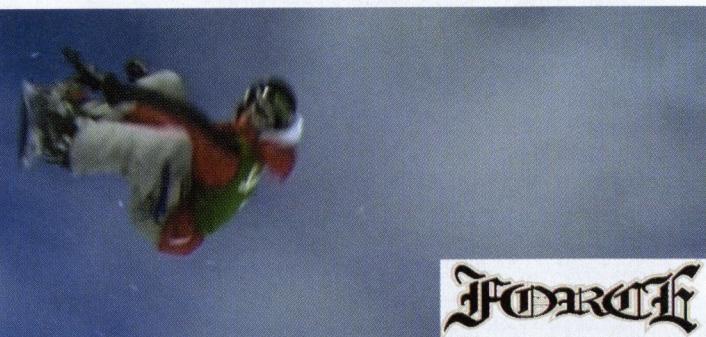
Rule the slopes with a Limited Edition Xbox Snowboard! Each one is valued at \$1000, and there are ten to win!

WITH THANKS TO Microsoft and the Xbox Pro Team, the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* is proud to offer its readers the chance to win one of ten exclusive Xbox snowboards. These limited edition boards have been manufactured by Force Industries using their custom developed technology, resulting in a board that gives the ultimate performance on the mountain.

For the first time in this year's season, the boards have been used by the Official Xbox Pro Team, consisting of Andrew Burton, Jason Onley, Trent Akhurst, Jon Jenson, Jason Duff and Marguerite Cossettini.

These boards are a limited edition and are not for sale anywhere! Look like a pro on the slopes next season on one of these cranking boards. For your chance to win one of ten Xbox snowboards, tell us two kinds of tricks you can pull off in *Amped* (Issue 01, 8.7) that you'd like to do on one of these boards.

Five runners up will receive a copy of *Amped Freestyle Snowboarding*, the first snowboarding game that's focussed on the fun of open freestyle boarding down real-world mountains like Utah's Brighton and California's Snow Summit.



WILD DVD GIVEAWAY!



DOES THE THOUGHT of movies like *American Pie*, *Tomcats* or *Road Trip* pique your interest? With thanks to Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment, the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* is offering readers the chance to win a copy of *Van Wilder - Party Liaison* on DVD.

There are five copies of the *Van Wilder* DVD to win, and all you have to do is name one of the stars of the movie!

Van Wilder is a comedy that embraces the party atmosphere of American college life. Van Wilder's been doing it for seven years, but after his father freezes the assets necessary to stay enrolled in college, he's forced to come up with new ways to sustain his fun-filled lifestyle. If a solution isn't found, his days as the ultimate party animal are over. It's guaranteed laughs all round for anyone who watches it!



Bonus extras for readers with a Unique Subscriber Number.

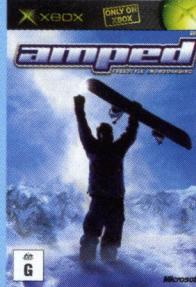
Readers who subscribed early enough will have received a special card with their four-digit Unique Subscriber Number. If you haven't got one, it's probably because you were too late! If you do have one, then you're in luck: just quote your number on your entry form, and if you're one of the winners who are drawn with a valid Unique Subscriber Number, we'll throw in a copy of this issue's unmissable Game of the Month, *Morrowind*, for absolutely nothing!

To enter, just cut out the form (or photocopy or scan it), fill out the details, correctly answer the simple question, and send it in to us before October 22, 2002.

YOU CAN WIN!

10 MAIN PRIZES

- 10 lucky winners will receive a Limited Edition Xbox Proteam Snowboard!



5 RUNNER UP PRIZES!

- 5 Runner Up winners will bag a copy of *Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding*!

XBOX PROTEAM SNOWBOARD COMPETITION

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING: LIST TWO TRICKS FROM AMPED

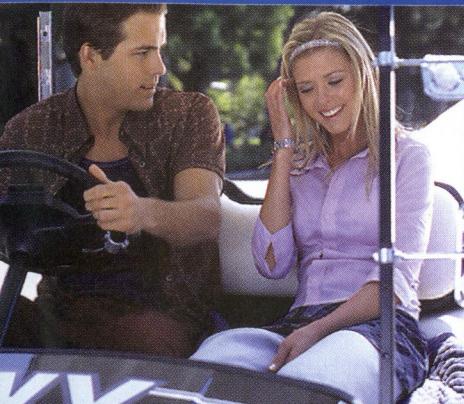
I HAVE A UNIQUE SUBSCRIBER NUMBER, AND I WANT TO BE IN THE RUNNING TO WIN A BONUS EXTRA COPY OF MORROWIND! MY NUMBER IS:

2 4 3 2 777

777

which part
is my sub
number?

(1.) This competition is open to all residents of Australia who mail in their entries to the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* between September 25, 2002 and October 22, 2002. Entries must be sent to *Xbox Proteam Snowboard*, *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*, P.O. Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW, 1355. Employees of the promoter and their immediate families, and agencies associated with this promotion are ineligible for the offer. (2.) Entries to the competition will have the chance to win only the prizes specified. (3.) The promoter accepts no responsibility for late, lost or misdirected mail. (4.) All entries become the property of the Promoter. (5.) The collection, use and disclosure of personal information provided in connection with this offer is governed by the Privacy Notice. (6.) Winners will be notified by October 25, 2002; details will be published in Issue 09 of the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*. (7.) The Promoter is Derwent Howard Publishing Pty, Ltd, P.O. Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW, 1355.



VAN WILDER COMPETITION

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING: NAME ONE OF THE STARS OF VAN WILDER

(1.) This competition is open to all residents of Australia who mail in their entries to the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* between September 25, 2002 and October 22, 2002. Entries must be sent to *Wild DVDs*, *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*, P.O. Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW, 1355. Employees of the promoter and their immediate families, and agencies associated with this promotion are ineligible for the offer. (2.) Entries to the competition will have the chance to win only the prizes specified. (3.) The promoter accepts no responsibility for late, lost or misdirected mail. (4.) All entries become the property of the Promoter. (5.) The collection, use and disclosure of personal information provided in connection with this offer is governed by the Privacy Notice. (6.) Winners will be notified by October 25, 2002; details will be published in Issue 09 of the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*. (7.) The Promoter is Derwent Howard Publishing Pty, Ltd, P.O. Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW, 1355.





X-MEDIA



DVD

HOME THEATRE HEAVEN



MAD MAX

RRP \$34.95 RATING R18+



THE ORIGINAL, UNBEATABLE post-apocalyptic blockbuster. Featuring Mel Gibson's breakthrough role as Max Rockatansky, future cop and man on the edge. On the barren fringes of Australia's radioactive ruins, the officers of the Main Force Patrol fight a losing battle against the degenerate Westies of the future. When Max loses his friends and family to the crimes of a cycle gang, he flips out and hunts them down. This low budget local film rocked the world, and changed the way we thought about the future.

If you've only seen *Mad Max* on a worn, rented VHS tape, then this new edition will seem like a completely different movie. This was the first Australian film to be shot through an anamorphic lens, and this letterboxed view is now fully restored. Plus, the sound is now in full DTS 5.1. These two factors alone contribute to the illusion of faster speeds and bigger stacks. Sure, all the props and acting are as dodgy as ever, but that's part of the charm.

This film has influenced video games from *The Last V8* to *Carmageddon*, and even spawned a couple of its own. Unfettered by the malaise of Hollywood fare, it's a bare bones thriller you can watch again and again. *Mad Max* is still the duck's nuts.

WORLD WRESTLING ENTERTAINMENT

RRP \$34.95 RATING M15+



IF YOU'VE GOT a burning need to watch big, sweaty men in their underpants grapple each other, then these new discs from World Wrestling Entertainment are for you. Each disc features around two hours of finely choreographed homo-

eroticism. Thanks to the power of DVD you can now see clearer than ever how none of the punches actually connect. Also note that much of the footage still bears the livery of the "WWF," an acronym recently and exclusively awarded by the courts to the World Wildlife Fund.



SAMURAI JACK

RRP \$29.95 RATING M15+



THIS FUTURISTIC CARTOON is soaked in violence - each episode is essentially one long fight scene. There's almost no dialogue, but plenty of stylish design work and '70s-looking cinematography. Jack is a Samurai on a mission - he hunts the

evil demon Aku through time and space. Each episode he slices and dices his way through hordes of robots and monsters, but this disc shows you how he got started in the business of being a wandering samurai. Heaps of interviews and documentary materials as well.



AUSTIN POWERS: GOLDMEMBER

Or: The Return of Fat Bastard

THIS NEW ADDITION to the wildly successful spy franchise takes the running gags we already know and love into strange new territory. Mike Myers again plays about half the cast this time, including the sinister arch-villain Goldmember. Michael "Logan's Run" York is back as Basil Exposition, and Mini-Me has met his match with Mini-Austin. Seth Green and Heather Graham also return, and the generation gap is extended both ways with the debut of Michael Caine as Austin's father. Rounding out this human zoo is Beyoncé Knowles as the new femme fatale, Foxy Cleopatra.

On September 19 we'll all learn if this franchise can go for the long haul. At the rate he's going Mike soon won't



↑ "No honey, you don't look like a giant Q-tip."

need any makeup to play the Fat Bastard, and Caine and York can't be long for this world. Then there's Rowan Atkinson, who's getting his own Bond spoof in the new year in *Johnny English*, as the eponymous bumbling spy. Expect trashy gross out humour, cleavage, and a plot even more fiendish than the *Alan Parsons Project*.



RATHER GOOD

www.rathergood.com

THIS WEB SITE IS A wonderful resource for time-wasting tomfoolery. Dozens of Shockwave cartoons and games await, including such cult hits as Tales of the Blode, Frightened Boy, and of course the inscrutable Crab of Ineffable Wisdom. Joel Veitch, the genius behind this incredible resource, has also constructed such useful

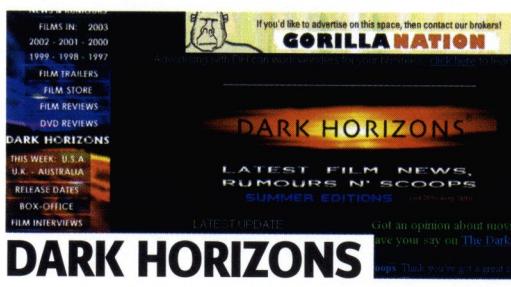


interactive tools as the Swearotron and the Touretteaphone. Hours of fun here, including new additions like movie files of him detonating small furry toys. Loyal fans of *rathergood.com* can show their appreciation by purchasing from a full line of branded merchandise. A very strange, yet rewarding site.



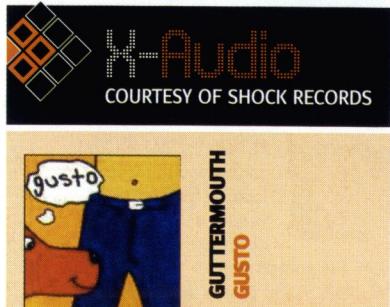
www.the5k.org

THE NOBLE GOAL OF this organisation is to promote economy and imagination in web design. At some point we've all tried to load up some useless web-page bloated with useless picture files and dubious functionality. You won't find any of that nonsense here - each entrant in this yearly competition must weigh in at 5k or less - that's a mere 5120 bytes! This year's winning entries include a fully functional email program, a port of Wolfenstein 3D (called Wolfenstein 5k), and a groovy platform game called "Pixel Ninja." If you're an aspiring programmer, or just want to see some tight code, then check it out.



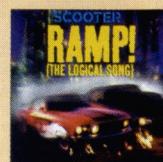
www.darkhorizons.com.au

THIS NEWS PORTAL IS updated every weekday, and showcases the latest news and rumours from the world of film and DVD. Garth Franklin, Sydney resident and die-hard film buff, is the hub of a global network of spies and informants. These code-named moles bring forth furtive reports from the sets of upcoming feature films, providing a rare glimpse behind the tawdry tinsel of "The Screw Factory." In the past he's hosted leaks from *Star Wars* and *The Matrix*, and the buzz usually hits Dark Horizons first. Also includes comprehensive links, movie release timetables, and stacks of high-res trailers to download.



GUTTERMOUTH
GUSTO

IT'S ALWAYS NICE to see a band that doesn't take itself, or the sacred cow of commercial punk rock, too seriously. Guttermouth display an innate ability to think outside the box of the So-Cal sound, flirting with disaster, country & western, even the spoken word. The style varies, but the content on *Gusto* retains constant levels of quality and irreverence.



SCOOTER
THE LOGICAL
SONG

TECHNO ISN'T DEAD, not by a long shot. Not while songs the likes of this can be unleashed on unsuspecting FM radio stations. Scooter, having survived the biggest genre train wreck since disco, take a perfectly good Supertramp song and turn it into a perfectly good bit of mid-'90s electronica. This is trash, the kind you can hang in a beatnik museum. Infectious.



FOZZY
HAPPENSTANCE

ARE YOU A ROCKER? Do you rock out? If so, then Fozzy have graciously supplied you with what they modestly regard as the greatest rock CD in the history of the universe. The suburb-shattering vocals of Mongoose McQueen render rockin' hits like "Crucify Yourself" and "Balls to the Wall" with such conviction that you'd swear he wrote them himself.



NO USE FOR
A NAME
HARD ROCK
BOTTOM

MINOR KEYS AND lyrics about love lost and lamenting losers. That's the gist of *No Use For a Name*'s fast-paced new long playing release. Subject matter occasionally strays from the futility of romance to the futility of war, lamenting past injustices, real and imagined, and wondering why everyone, including oneself, is so nasty all the time. Good, but a bit of a downer.



CHARTS

READERS MOST WANTED



LET US KNOW the Xbox games you're most looking forward to. All you have to do is email at staff@oxm.com.au

with the subject header "Most Wanted" - and please always indicate your order of preference.



OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE COMMENT

Well, well, well. The top FOUR haven't flinched since last month, and it's hardly surprising. In fact, we're thinking of banning *Halo* 2 chat, seeing as though it'll be another 18 months - at the earliest - until we'll see it. Let us know what you think, and remember to enclose your Top Five Most Wanted.

1. HALO 2
DEVELOPER: BUNGIE PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
RELEASE: LATE 2003

2. PROJECT EGO
DEV: BIG BLUE BOX PUB: MICROSOFT
RELEASE: JULY 2003

3. COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3
DEVELOPER AND PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS
RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2002

4. UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP
DEV: DIGITAL EXTREMES PUB: INFOGRAMES
RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2002

5. SPLINTER CELL
DEV: UBI SOFT MONTREAL PUB: UBI SOFT
RELEASE: DECEMBER 2002

6. BLINX: THE TIME SWEEPER
DEVELOPER: ARTOON PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2002

7. TOCA RACE DRIVER
DEVELOPER AND PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS
RELEASE: OCTOBER 2002

8. METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE
DEVELOPER: KONAMI PUBLISHER: KONAMI
RELEASE: TBA

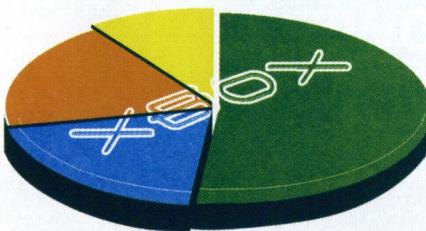
9. CRAZY TAXI 3: HIGH ROLLER
DEVELOPER: HITMAKER PUBLISHER: SEGA
RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2002

10. TIMESPLITTERS 2
DEVELOPER: FREE RADICAL PUBLISHER: EIDOS
RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2002

THE HOT TOPIC

The biggest Xbox topics, polyunsaturated

THIS MONTH: Which RPG do you want the most?



KEY (per cent)

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Project Ego | 20 |
| Star Wars Galax. | 28 |
| KOTOR | 28 |
| Phan. Star Online | 24 |
| Paul Wilson is Robocop | 0 |

SUN TAN COLOUR CARD

...or, Guess Who's Been On Holiday?



MILKY NESCAFE (JON)



HOUR-OLD BANANA (STEVE)



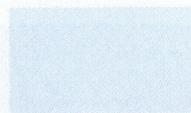
SEMI-SKIMMED (BEN)



PEUCE (ED)



CARAMAC (PAUL)



FRESH A4 (GAV)

XBOX GAME RELEASES

The forthcoming games you need to know about

| DATE | GAME | DEVELOPER | PUBLISHER | ISSUE |
|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------|
| AUGUST | BRUCE LEE | RONIN ENTS | UNIVERSAL | 3 |
| | SPLASHDOWN | RAINBOW STUDIOS | INFOGRAMES | 4 |
| | AGGRESSIVE INLINE | Z-AXIS | ACCLAIM | 4 |
| SEPTEMBER | BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER | THE COLLECTIVE | EA | 2 |
| | NHL 2003 | EA | EA | 7 |
| | MADDEN NFL 2003 | EA | EA | 7 |
| | CHASE | I-MAGINE | BAM! | 2 |
| | MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2 | RAINBOW STUDIOS | ACTIVISION | 4 |
| | PRO TENNIS WTA TOUR | KONAMI | KONAMI | 7 |
| | FILA WORLD TOUR TENNIS | THQ | THQ | 4 |
| | IRONSTORM | 4X STUDIO | WANADOO | 4 |
| | EGGO MANIA | KEMCO | KEMCO | N/A |
| | MYST III:EXILE | PRESTO STUDIOS | UBISOFT | N/A |
| | KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER | TREYARCH | ACTIVISION | 4 |
| | STREET HOOPS | PARADOX | ACTIVISION | 4 |
| | BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA | LOST TOYS | INFOGRAMES | 3 |
| | KENGO | LIGHTWEIGHT | UBISOFT | 4 |
| | LARGO WINCH | UBISOFT | UBISOFT | 4 |
| | SHADOW OF MEMORIES | KONAMI | KONAMI | N/A |
| | BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALL | SNOWBLIND | VIRGIN | 4 |
| | CONFlict: DESERT STORM | PIVOTAL | SCI | 4 |
| | WWE: RAW IS WAR | ANCHOR | THQ | N/A |
| | LOONS | WARTHOG | INFOGRAMES | 6 |
| | FURIOUS KARTING | BABYLON | INFOGRAMES | 4 |
| | TOXIC GRIND | TBA | THQ | 4 |
| | CRAZY TAXI 3: HIGH ROLLER | HITMAKER | SEGA | 3 |
| | TUROK: EVOLUTION | ACCLAIM | ACCLAIM | 2 |
| | BLADE II | MUCKY FOOT | ACTIVISION | 4 |
| | BARBARIAN | SAFFIRE | VIRGIN | 4 |

| DATE | GAME | DEVELOPER | PUBLISHER | ISSUE |
|----------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------|
| OCTOBER | DEATHROW | SOUTHEND INTERACTIVE | UBISOFT | 6 |
| | TIMESPLITTERS 2 | FREE RADICAL | EIDOS | 4 |
| | TAZ WANTED | BLITZ GAMES | INFOGRAMES | 3 |
| | PHANTOM CRASH | PHANTAGRAM | PHANTAGRAM | 4 |
| | ELDER SCROLLS 3 | BETHESDA SOFTWORKS | UBISOFT | 4 |
| | COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3 | CODEMASTERS | CODEMASTERS | 4 |
| | LOTUS CHALLENGE | TITUS | VIE | N/A |
| | ROBOPOL | TITUS | VIE | N/A |
| | TOEJAM AND EARL 3 | VISUAL CONCEPTS | SEGA | 3 |
| | TOM CLANCY'S GHOST REC | RED STORM | UBISOFT | 2 |
| | RACE OF CHAMPIONS: RALLY F CLIMAX | ACTIVISION | ACTIVISION | 4 |
| | ZAPPER | BLITZ GAMES | INFOGRAMES | N/A |
| NOVEMBER | SUPERMAN: MAN OF STEEL | CIRCUS FREAK STUDIOS | INFOGRAMES | 2 |
| | BLINX: THE TIME SWEEPER | ARTOON | MICROSOFT | 4 |
| | MONOPOLY PARTY | TBC | INFOGRAMES | 6 |
| | TERMINATOR: FATE OF DAWN | PARADIGM | INFOGRAMES | N/A |
| | TOCA RACE DRIVER | CODEMASTERS | CODEMASTERS | 4 |
| | LOOSE CANNON | DIGITAL ANVIL | UBISOFT | 4 |
| | TOEJAM AND EARL III | TJ&E PRODUCTIONS | SEGA | 3 |
| | VEXX | ACCLAIM | ACCLAIM | 4 |
| | MIDTOWN MADNESS 3 | DIGITAL ILLUSIONS | MICROSOFT | 3 |
| | QUANTUM REDSHIFT | CURLY MONSTERS | MICROSOFT | 3 |
| | SNEAKERS | MEDIAVISION | MICROSOFT | 3 |
| | SOUL CALIBUR 2 | NAMCO | NAMCO | 4 |
| | MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY | MIDWAY | MIDWAY | 4 |
| | MALICE: KAT'S TALE | ARGONAUT | VIVENDI | 4 |
| | KUNG FU CHAOS | JUST ADD MONSTERS | MICROSOFT | 4 |
| | MACE GRIFFIN: B HUNTER | WARTHOG | EA | 4 |
| | THE THING | COMPART. | UNIVERSAL | 2 |
| | HOTD3 | WOW | SEGA | 4 |
| | PANZER DRAGOON ORTA | SMILEBIT | SEGA | 4 |
| | RISK | TBC | INFOGRAMES | N/A |
| | SILENT HILL 2: INNER FEARS | KONAMI | KONAMI | 4 |
| | JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE | EA | EA | 5 |

inform

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE CHART

WHEN YOU WALK away from a shop with a game in your hand, in a bag or tucked in your trousers (shame on you) an almost invisible wire attached to the box is pulled taut. The other end is fixed to an umbrella - every time it opens, one more sale is notched up.



↑ DOA3 IS STILL worth dipping into from time to time. We're yet to play a beat-'em-up (outside of *Soul Calibur*) that feels as bone-crunching as this. Limbs interlock and fighters move in a believable way. Shop around, as some places are selling this for cheaper.

1. HALO: COMBAT EVOLVED

DEVELOPER: BUNGIE PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
The Master Chief reigns supreme as King of the Hill for yet another month!

2. HUNTER: THE RECKONING

DEVELOPER: HIGH VOLTAGE PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY
Hunter casts its undead shadow on the silver medal spot.

3. PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

DEVELOPER: BIZARRE CREATIONS PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
Beating the traffic, *Project Gotham* shifts into third gear.

4. JAMES BOND 007 IN... AGENT UNDER FIRE

DEVELOPER: EA REDWOOD PUBLISHER: EA
007 is sitting pretty, settling for a dry Martini and fourth place.

5. SPIDER-MAN

DEVELOPER: TREYARCH PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
Your friendly neighbourhood *Spider-Man* swings down a few steps.

6. RALLISPORT CHALLENGE

DEVELOPER: CLIMAX BRIGHTON PUBLISHER: THQ
Hugging a top ten place like it would a tight corner.

7. CRASH BANDICOOT: TWOC

DEVELOPER: ODDWORLD INHABITANTS PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
Abe and Munch must have been at the Espresso - they've got a re-entry!

8. DEAD OR ALIVE 3

DEVELOPER: TECMO PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
Gets off its ass, dusts itself down and gets beaten down a couple of spots.

9. MAX PAYNE

DEVELOPER: REMEDY ENTERTAINMENT PUBLISHER: TAKE TWO
Is bullet time coming to an end? Not if *Max* has any say in the matter.

10. PRISONER OF WAR

DEVELOPER: RAGE PUBLISHER: RAGE
Say hello to the World War II-themed adventure title!



↑ ISSUE 05's Game of the Month thundered up to the Number 2 slot, and *Hunter: The Reckoning*'s riotous mixture of zombies and intense gunplay is proving quite a draw. Just be careful the endless hours of thoughtless blasting don't turn you into a shuffling, brain dead cannibal yourself, OK?



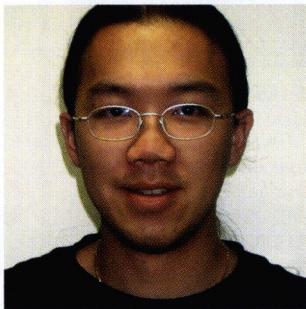
↑ THERE'S A mixed reaction to *Prisoner of War*, but we find this old-school style hit of brain-teasing adventure to be pretty good. It's a bit camp, not all that flashy, but ultimately good entertainment if you're prepared to sit back and think very hard.

| DATE | GAME | DEVELOPER | PUBLISHER | ISSUE |
|----------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------|
| DECEMBER | YAGER | YAGER | THQ | 2 |
| | WHACKED | PRESTO STUDIOS | MICROSOFT | 4 |
| | DOA XTREME BEACH V-BALL | TECMO | MICROSOFT | 5 |
| | TOTAL IMMERSION RACING | RAZORWORKS | EMPIRE INTERACTIVE | 5 |
| | METAL GEAR SOLID 2 | KONAMI | KONAMI | 4 |
| | BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW | KEMCO | KEMCO | 4 |
| | ROCKY | RAGE | RAGE | 4 |
| | MOTO X | KONAMI | KONAMI | N/A |
| | FROGGER CLASSIC | KONAMI | KONAMI | N/A |
| | X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION | PARADOX | ACTIVISION | 4 |
| | JEDI KNIGHT 2: OUTCAST | LUCASARTS | ACTIVISION | N/A |
| | TRANSWORLD S-BOARDING | HOUSEMARQUE | INFOGRAMES | 3 |
| | MICRO MACHINES | INFOGRAMES SHEFFIELD | INFOGRAMES | N/A |
| | TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4 | NEVERSOFT | ACTIVISION | 4 |
| | UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP | DIGITAL EXTREMES | INFOGRAMES | 1 |
| | LORD OF THE RINGS: FOTR | WXP | UNIVERSAL INT. | 2 |
| | BRUTE FORCE | DIGITAL ANVIL | MICROSOFT | 4 |
| | INDIANA JONES | THE COLLECTIVE | LUCASARTS | 4 |
| | MINORITY REPORT | TREYARCH | ACTIVISION | 4 |
| | MISSION IMPOSSIBLE | PARADIGM | INFOGRAMES | 3 |
| | STAR WARS: KOTOR | BIOWARE | ACTIVISION | 2 |
| | MINORITY REPORT | TREYARCH | ACTIVISION | 4 |
| | RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC | UBISOFT | UBISOFT | 4 |
| | SPLINTER CELL | UBISOFT | UBISOFT | 4 |
| | FALCONE: INTO THE MAELS | POINT BLANK | VIRGIN | 4 |
| | LEGENDS OF WRESTLING 2 | ACCLAIM | ACCLAIM | N/A |
| | REIGN OF FIRE | KUJU | BAM! | 7 |
| | MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2 | CAPCOM | CAPCOM | N/A |
| | MECH ASSAULT | MICROSOFT | MICROSOFT | 4 |
| 2003 | GEOFF CRAMMOND'S GP4 | MICROPROSE | INTERPLAY | 2 |
| | GALLEON | CONFOUNDING FACTOR | INTERPLAY | N/A |
| | SHAWN MURRAY'S PRO | SHABA | ACTIVISION | 4 |
| | TETRIS WORLDS | BLUE PLANET | THQ | 6 |
| | SHINING LORE | PHANTAGRAM | PHANTAGRAM | 4 |
| | STEEL BATTALION | CAPCOM | CAPCOM | 2 |

| DATE | GAME | DEVELOPER | PUBLISHER | ISSUE |
|------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| 2003 | STAR WARS GALAXIES | LUCASARTS | LUCASARTS | 5 |
| | WWE: CRUSH HOUR | PACIFIC COAST POWER & LIGHT | THQ | 5 |
| | NINJA GAIDEN | TECMO | MICROSOFT | 6 |
| | CRIMSON SEAS | KOEI | TBC | 5 |
| | LAMBORGHINI | RAGE | RAGE | 4 |
| | TWIN CALIBER | RAGE | RAGE | 4 |
| | PSYCHONAUTS | DOUBLE FINE | MICROSOFT | 5 |
| | DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS | INFOGRAMES HUNT VALLEY | INFOGRAMES | N/A |
| | ALTER ECHO | TBA | THQ | 4 |
| | EVIL DEAD: A FISTFUL | TBA | THQ | 4 |
| | DRAGONS LAIR 3D | TBC | UBISOFT | N/A |
| | PROJECT BGE | TBC | UBISOFT | N/A |
| | WOLVERINE'S REVENGE | GENEPOOL | ACTIVISION | 4 |
| | TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA | LUXOFLUX | ACTIVISION | 5 |
| | PROJECT EGO/FABLE | BIG BLUE BOX | MICROSOFT | 4 |
| | HALO 2 | BUNGIE | MICROSOFT | 5 |
| | RAVEN SHIELD XIII | UBISOFT | UBISOFT | 4 |
| | BC | INTREPID ENTERTAINMENT | MICROSOFT | 5 |
| | COPS | FOX | VIVENDI | 4 |
| | VIRTUA FIGHTER 4.1 | AM2 | SEGA | 4 |
| | PHANTASY STAR ONLINE | SONIC TEAM | SEGA | 4 |
| | SHENMUE 2 | AM2 | SEGA | 4 |
| | ULTIMATE BLADE OF DARK | REBEL ACT | CODEMASTERS | 4 |
| | GLADIUS | TBA | LUCASARTS | 4 |
| | SHAYDE | TBA | METRO 3D | 4 |
| | ARMADA 2 | TBA | METRO 3D | 4 |
| | GRAVITY GAMES | MIDWAY | MIDWAY | 4 |
| | BALLERS | MIDWAY | MIDWAY | 4 |
| | LEGION | SEVEN STUDIOS | MIDWAY | 4 |
| | DUALITY | TRILOBYTE GRAPHICS | PHANTAGRAM | 4 |
| | KINGDOM UNDER FIRE 2 | TBA | PHANTAGRAM | 4 |
| | STRIDENT: THE SHADOW | PHANTAGRAM | PHANTAGRAM | 4 |
| | RESTAURANT MANAGING SIM | TBA | PHANTAGRAM | 4 |
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LETTERS

WRITE TO US AT: Official Australian Xbox Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355
Email us at: staff@oxm.com.au. Your opinions count - we want to hear them!



LETTERS 07 EDITOR

NAME: KEVIN CHEUNG

GAME OF CHOICE: MORROWIND

Halo 2. Deathrow. Splinter Cell. You'd think these would be the hot topics of this month's letters. But no. Instead, we got a few hundred concerning a small problem with last issue, which we've taken the time to explain in the first letter.



LATE MAG?

I am just wondering when the next issue of your magazine will begin delivery. It's been well over a month since the last issue. Thanks very much,

Brock Logan
Via email

Terribly sorry about that - we've received hundreds of emails like this in regards to magazine subscriptions going out late, and we feel an explanation is in order. The company that handles distribution thought it would be a good idea to pack the magazines in paper envelopes, since so many of them were being stolen straight out of the post. Unfortunately, the envelopes didn't arrive in time, and for reasons known only to them, they chose to wait until the envelopes arrived before sending the magazines out.

So essentially, it was all done with the best intentions, but that's of little consolation to those who had to wait an extra couple of weeks for their magazine. We all work our collective arses off to get the magazines finished for you on time, so it's very upsetting for us when bizarre things like this happen. Please accept our

humble apologies. By this time, the problems should be sorted out, and you hopefully won't have to send us anymore of those angry emails.

RIP RRP

I have played games on various platforms and formats for about 20 years now and can honestly say that Xbox is the best console I have come across, but the prices of the games are way too high.

I buy and play PC games which generally fall in price after a relatively short period. If the Xbox game pricing structure was to reflect PC games pricing then there could be budget, mid-range and full-price games available.

At present, at \$100 a game, Xbox games are way too expensive, and beyond most budgets of the target market that Xbox is aimed at. I have *Halo* and will buy another game at the end of the month, but before then I can't justify the expense of another game.

Cheaper games would advance the Xbox cause, but if the prices are left as they are, they will surely work against it.

Dominic Corby
Via email



The writer of each month's Star Letter will receive one of these specially made STM back packs, perfect for transporting your Xbox to a friend's house. Everything fits neatly inside, and we even use it ourselves!

HIGH TECH HOME THEATRE LOVE

Until recently, I was running my PS2 on my dedicated home theatre which consisted of 5.1 Denon Digital Amp (110 wpc), a Velodyne 200 watt Sub, Dynaudio/ BMW speakers and an NEC Projector (84inch/210cm Picture), all connected via Liberty (THX Certified) cables, all enclosed within a room painted in a dark colour to allow for the best possible viewing. While the PS2 was good on this system, it was the Xbox that totally blew me away! *Halo* surrounded you with sound effects from all speakers, and the explosions rocked through the sub as if you were in the middle of the movie *Black Hawk Down*! You could hear the marines shout from behind you, and in many instances the effect's made you instantly duck for cover!

The picture on *DOA3* is the best example to show how nicely rendered a game can look on the big screen. Together with the digital surround sound, my mate's are now asking why they bothered with their recent purchases of PS2s!

The PS2 "old school" Pro-Logic is no comparison to Xbox's real-time surround sound especially when you compare the two together as I have done. All of the Dolby Digital on PS2 is only on cut-scenes between the game (eg. *MGS2*) Any bad points? Not really, except that Component cable (dropped on Australia's Xbox) would have been better than the S-Video. The PS2 is now used to entertain small kids in the family room.

Shane Blair
Via email

There's nothing sweeter than hearing from a satisfied customer who knows how to push the Xbox to the limit.



↑ Believe us: there isn't much information kicking around about *Halo 2*!

Microsoft takes a portion of the cash paid for each Xbox game sold, and that percentage is fixed. Ultimately, it's the publishers who decide what price the software retails at. Now, \$100 is a standard, accepted price point for a game during the opening months of a console's life, as was the case with the PlayStation 2.

Budget software is a chicken and egg. A drop in software prices will lead to increased hardware sales, which leads to a larger market of buyers, which leads to a drop in software prices. Platinum ranges only appear after a machine has been around for a significant period of time - Xbox has only been around for six months.

Regarding comparisons with the PC market, it's a format that's been around for donkey's years, and so publishers

can rely on a constant stream of sales for years to come with a series of gradual, proven price reductions. If a console hangs around for a considerable amount of time (the PSOne has come closest so far), then maybe we'll see the same pricing in effect.



WHY CAN'T WE ALL GET ALONG?

Just got *Legends of Wrestling* and found that it isn't compatible with the Gamester Arcade Stick. Wish I'd known that before I bought it. Is this common with third party hardware?

Steve
Via e-mail

We had a go, and found that the D-pad didn't respond. This kind of thing is rare, and it's the first time we've come across it. Rob Goodchild, of Gamester, said: "Unfortunately, *Legends of Wrestling* and the arcade stick are indeed incompatible, the reason being that while the arcade stick replicates the function of the D-pad, *Legends of Wrestling* does not have a D-pad function. This problem has occurred at a software development stage, which Microsoft is aware of. All parties are working to minimise the risk of the same issue arising with future titles." If you find this with other games, tell us.



HALO, GOODBYE

I think \$14.95 is a lot of dosh for a magazine and I expect a little extra, which, to be fair, I usually get. Sadly Issue 05 was a bit of a disappointment. *Halo* news promised in Issue 04, a mention on the front cover, *Halo* on the disc, big 'Halo exclusive' banners, and what do we get?

A couple of measly paragraphs telling us *Halo 2* is confirmed (what a shock), two videos of *Halo* that have been around

Shorts

on the internet for ages, and another four that are the same but with different voiceovers! As for the articles on *Halo*, they amounted to the usual rehash of wish lists and banal tips 'n' tactics. It's a good magazine, lads, but don't get us excited about things we've already seen.

James Bruton
Via e-mail

Everyone knew that *Halo 2* was as inevitable as *Big Brother 3*, but in those few 'measly' paragraphs we revealed the only concrete details in existence about Bungie's sequel. At the time of writing, these are still the only bits of information available at all concerning the game, anywhere, ever.

As for the cover disc content, we'd be happy to wager that most of our readers, even those with PCs, won't have seen the footage, and that most of those found it enjoyable and interesting. The different voiceovers were there to give you insights into the footage on show, highlighting the roles of the very different members of the development team.

Being massive *Halo* fans (and, we reckon, the best *Halo* deathmatchers in the country), we also think that most of our readers enjoyed the *Halo* feature. There's only so much we can do without storming the Bungie HQ and wrenching the very design documents from their hands. Now there's an idea...

And here's a heads up - we'll be featuring the cream of the *Halo 2* wish lists that the readers have sent us in a near-future issue. Sorry, James, but you may want to give those a miss, too.



↑ GP4: delayed again, unfortunately

EASY AS 1-2

I am one of the lucky people who has broadband internet and I read the article you wrote about Xbox Live in Issue 05 of your magazine.

However, when I called the local specialist shop to find out more about how it works, I got a little confused by the information I was given. I told the guy about how Xbox had an Ethernet port and stuff built in, and he said that all I have to do is get some kind of address from the network card built into the machine.

I'm not very technically minded and couldn't find any mention of the network card on the tech specs for Xbox. Does my



SHOCK HORROR

Will *Resident Evil* be coming out on Xbox?

Various
Via e-mails

No. There, now wasn't that painless?



PSYCHADELICACY

Hello, cheery folks. I have just been staring at the graphics on the Xbox music mode to Fatboy Slim's *Halfway...* album. The way the first few tracks move, the graphics are gorgeous. Like staring into flames!

Mat Morgan
Via e-mail

That's nice, dear. As long as you didn't wake up an hour later on with blood on your hands.



DON'T STOP MOVIN'

Will there be a dancing game coming out on Xbox?

Craig Walker
Via email

There's nothing in the pipeline at present, but don't rule out the possibility of one in the near future. At the very least, *Gavin Ogden's Bump 'n' Grind* is currently being streamlined for submission to publishers nationwide.



GROUNDED

Do you know when we might be able to buy *Flight Academy*, the game launched to the Japanese market this month? I've heard that you are likely to review it.

Mark Barlow
Via email

There's no Australian release date yet. And until there is, we won't touch it as we don't review import games.



RIGHT ON

Remember kids, just say "NO!" to console wars.

Dan Beggs
Via email

Exactly. The same goes for *Police Academy 3-7*, *Mickey Mouse*, and anything with white chocolate in it.



IONLINE UP

Well, Xbox Live! I can't wait; the thought of being able to race or blast our American friends across the water, or indeed anywhere around the world. Or even playing you guys at the magazine. Great!

X-Dog
Via email

We very much hope that you maintain this cheery disposition when you're on the receiving end of our lethal fragsticks. See you in cyberspace, dude.

Classifieds



FOR SALE: Spider-Man The Movie in good condition for \$60 and *Blood Omen 2* in great condition for \$80.

Contact Tom on: (02) 9572 7510; or email SpazzyD@hotmail.com



FOR SALE: Jet Set Radio Future and *Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2*, both in excellent condition, \$60 each; or will swap for *Max Payne*, *THPS3*, *Prisoner of War* or *SSX Tricky*.

Contact James on: 5977 5726 Melbourne area only.

Send submissions for sales and exchanges to staff@oxm.com.au with subject title 'Classifieds', or snail-mail it to Classifieds, Official Australian Xbox Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355. The Official Australian Xbox Magazine can't guarantee all submissions will be published. Information is accurate at the time of publication. We take no responsibility for transactions.

Xbox have this network card built in like the guy said to me? If so, how do I go about getting the info that he needs so we can use it?

Jamie Camp
Via e-mail

We'll keep the technical jiggery-pokery and details for an upcoming feature that offers a full and detailed explanation for playing Xbox Live, but here's all you need to know for now. Everything you need to connect instantly to Xbox Live via your broadband connection is contained within your Xbox. As long as you have an active broadband account (as you do), and the Xbox Live Starter Kit (containing a network cable and the

headset) then you just plug in, connect and play. You needn't worry about any network addresses or anything else that someone may tell you is required.

Whatever that guy told you was rubbish.

When it's time for Xbox Live, all you need to do is plug and play.



ONLY AS YOUNG AS (WHO) YOU FEEL

Do you think, at 35 years old, and married with children, I am a bit too old and sensible to own an Xbox? Or are there many others like me out there? At the moment, nobody else in my circle of friends owns an Xbox or has much interest in video games so I have yet to explore the full potential of the multiplayer modes in *Halo*. I tried playing against my wife but she was useless and kept getting upset when I shot her. Before you ask, my daughter is only 18 months old, so not up to playing *Halo* just yet.

Sean Winters
Via email

You're never too old or too sensible. You're not alone, as we've had several letters along these lines. Maybe you older folks could get together and start a dodgy-sounding Club Thirtysomething. Or maybe not. Go easy on the missus, too. Correct me if I'm wrong, but you're making a very powerful enemy there.

RELEASE GREASE

Can you please set us straight on why so many games miss their original release date? For example, *Commandos 2* was due in May but has slipped until September. I can live with that, but after rushing home from work (but still sticking to the speed limits), I get to the shop to find that - gasp shock horror - it's been delayed! Again! - you can see my frustration.

It's the same thing with the lovely looking *Prisoner of War*. First, your mag says June, then it's sometime in July, and now I see it's down for August. What is going on? Please help!

Richard
Via e-mail

It's known as Release Grease, and it affects every video game, ever. In most cases, it's due to publishers and developers trying to bend their original deadlines to put the final spit and polish on their games. In other situations, games will be held back from release because publishers believe they will sell better at different times of year, just like blockbuster movies being held until the summer for release at the cinema.

Slippage of titles such as *The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind*, *Commandos 2*, and most recently *Geoff Crammond's Grand Prix 4* for whatever reason, is especially unfortunate, considering that most people like to rug up and play their games during the winter. In the summer, sure, it's Christmas, but the market's more crowded around that time. It could be worse: games like *Tour De France* were canned outright.

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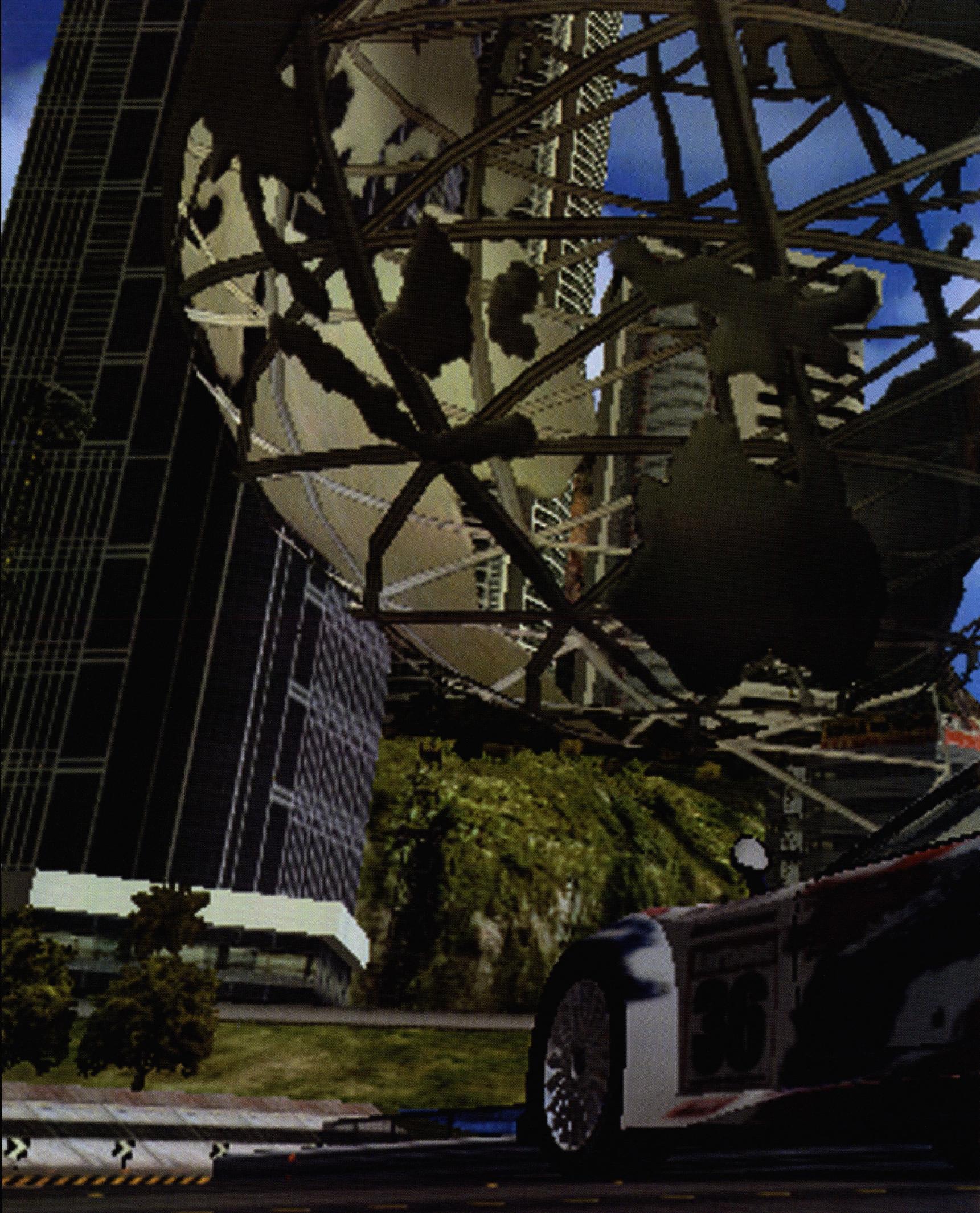
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RACING EVOLUZIONE

Design your own cars to compete with the best names in racing



WORDS: GAVIN OGDEN

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: MILESTONE
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES
RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 2003
PLAYERS: 1-2
WEBSITE: WWW.MILESTONE.IT

WHILE THE MAJORITY of racing games allow us to 'virtually' test-drive every car ever made, it's rare that a game lets you design and build your own vehicles before going head-to-head against the world's best. The Italian-based developer Milestone is creating a game that allows you to do exactly that and we've played it before anyone else in the world.

Racing Evoluzione challenges gamers to

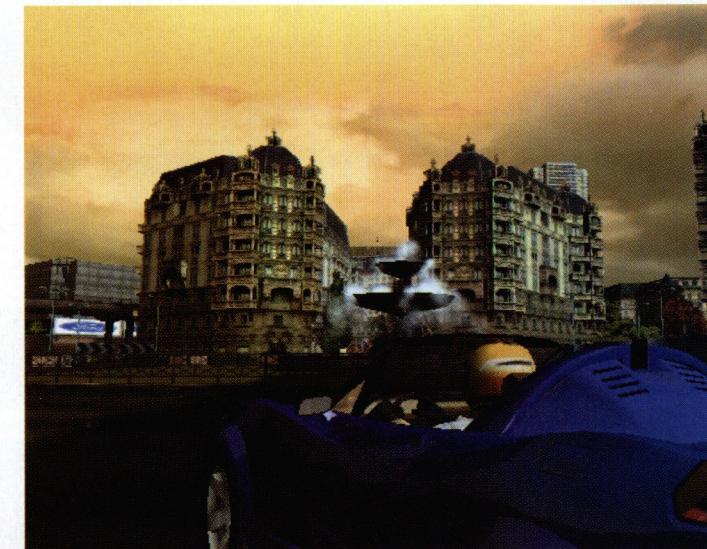
build a championship-winning car from scratch. The player begins this long but fun process with a tiny garage and a lonely mechanic and must make money by winning races before moving on to bigger, and much faster, things.

At various stages in the game, you'll be looking to move to new premises, start a production line, begin racing and sell the cars before designing more advanced ones and putting them into production.

Italian developer Milestone's team of 23 people has been working on the project for over two years now. And though a major element of the game is its role playing aspect, Milestone knows that the journey to the finishing line is just as crucial to the gameplay experience.

The worst thing that could happen is Milestone creating an engaging management game without paying any attention to the actual driving experience. There's nothing worse than a good looking racing game that plays and handles dreadfully. But thankfully, the development team is endeavouring to make both the





↑ The level of detail in each environment is amazing.

↑ Expect to drive past many historic buildings.



↑ There are lots of cars up for grabs but the real fun is in building your own.

"ONE OF THE MAIN OBJECTIVES WITH THIS GAME WAS TO CREATE SOMETHING ALONG THE LINES OF *GRAN TURISMO* AND *SEGA GT*"

» racing and the off-track parts of its game as good as they can be.

Racing your cars will count for 80 per cent of the whole experience. A fact that the artificial intelligence (AI) and physics programmer, Stefano Lecchi, is well aware of.

"One of the main objectives with *Racing Evoluzione* was to create something for Xbox

along the lines of *Gran Turismo* and *Sega GT*. We wanted exciting gameplay combined with a physical model which, even though it's quite realistic, would ensure a great racing experience that went through different stages of difficulty across the range of cars available."

While there will be an opportunity to jump straight into the action in a quick race mode, the

core of the game is known as the Dream mode, inspired by the efforts of legendary car man Enzo Ferrari. It's in this mode that the business side of the game really comes into the equation.

In the Dream mode, your newly established company gradually grows once you start winning races during the competition season. This should eventually lead to you managing your own research team, a group of people with the ability to produce new plans and projects based on your directives.

After your first car has rolled off the production line, you're allowed entry into the different races. Once your company's name has built up a good reputation, orders will start to come in from individual buyers and

» BONUS INFO

» MULTIPLAYER While the final version of *Racing Evoluzione* will feature a variety of single-player racing modes, there'll only be one two-player mode. In that, you'll be able to race your own designs against a friend's to see which one of you created the best car.



▲ Tracksides will be packed with moving scenery, from trees swaying in the wind to crowds cheering you on.



▲ It'll be hard not to stop and stare at the lush environments as you're racing through them.

BONUS INFO

REAL ENEMIES
Once you've designed, built and produced your very own dream machine you'll be able to put it to the test against a variety of licensed cars. While you're driving at top speeds across the game's three locations look out for the likes of the 2003 Dodge Viper RT-10, Lotus GT1, Toyota Supra and many more. They'll probably be in front of you.

IN THE DREAM MODE, YOU EVENTUALLY MANAGE YOUR OWN RESEARCH TEAM"

► then bigger corporations and institutions, one example being that the local police force might be interested in your model as a new vehicle to patrol the streets - a contract obviously worth a lot of money that can then be plunged back into the business.

If you want to climb the ladder in the motor industry, you'll have to work closely with your assistants. They become essential in the management of sponsorship deals. These guys will also become responsible for your team of technicians that looks after your portfolio of self-built dream machines.

As is typical with the majority of racing games, each car has its own driving and handling styles. As you progress up the ladder to more powerful cars, the real test of your driving

ability comes in how you handle the high performance beasts. Even though the controls are arcade-like rather than aping a real-life simulation, there is a complex physics model under the bonnet of *Racing Evoluzione*.

"We have a very realistic driving model behind the game," says Lecchi. "The physics model simulates every aspect of driving a car, from clutch, gear change, and skids to steering and tyre friction on different surfaces."

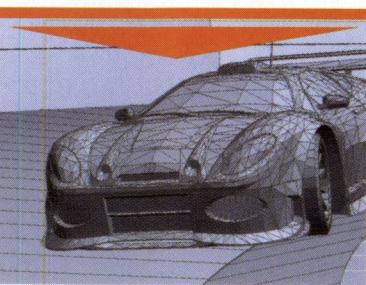
"The player will notice all these elements when racing. They allow him or her to become immediately involved in the dynamics of the game itself."

"A successful driving style depends on the type of set-up selected by the player, as opposed to *Gran Turismo* where there are only two

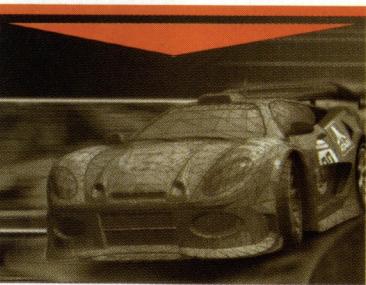
A FOREIGN CONCEPT



► UNLIKE MOST racing titles, *Racing Evoluzione* not only offers us cars from the likes of Aston Martin, Mercedes, Lotus and Chevrolet, but it will also boast an impressive range of futuristic concept cars.



► INFOGRAMES HELD a competition for some of the best known European design schools, asking the students to create new and original models of racing cars. Milestone then looked long and hard at the sketches sent in, turning the best of them into 3D models for the game.



► THE FINAL VERSION will feature no less than 80 different models, split into three categories: Street Version (base model), Evolution (customisable set-up) and Competition (race prototype). Each category has four classes: roadster, sport car, super car and dream car.

different set-ups: drift and racing. Here, players can completely cater to their own driving style."

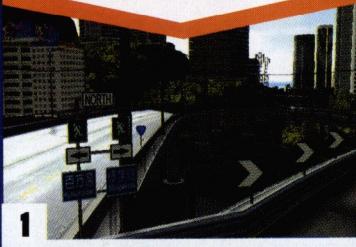
The AI of the other drivers plays a fundamental role in bringing the game to life, with Milestone concentrating on a straightforward approach. Says Lecchi:

"The player's opponents will behave very realistically and use the whole track rather than following one line around the course. It's all too common in driving games to see the cars ahead sticking to predefined routes without making any mistakes, leaving the player to catch up."

The other drivers will behave in several ways depending on your performance behind the wheel. If you begin to lose ground because the cars in front are faster than you, then you won't be lapped but you will have to

THE LOCATIONS >>

Racing Evoluzione is shaping up to be a great game to play, and it's also looking like it will be a great game to watch someone else do all the hard work. The tracks are based in four different and highly detailed environments.



1



2

THE COURSES ARE based in three different continents. America features an industrial design, Europe displays beautiful historic buildings while Asia has a seamless blend of nature and technology in its trackside detail.



3



4

ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES have been used from several real cities, as well as shots and views from films such as *Ronin*. This approach was taken to characterise each track and give the players a feel for each particular route.

ENVIRONMENT >>

It's hard to focus on the road when everything else looks so good



>> COUNCIL WORK

All tracks will feature several different moving objects in the background.

>> LANDING STRIP

Keep an eye out for planes roaring overhead during a race and the occasional stray bird.

>> CROWD CONTROL

Spectators will release balloons and confetti to celebrate the opening stage of a race.

>> BUILDINGS

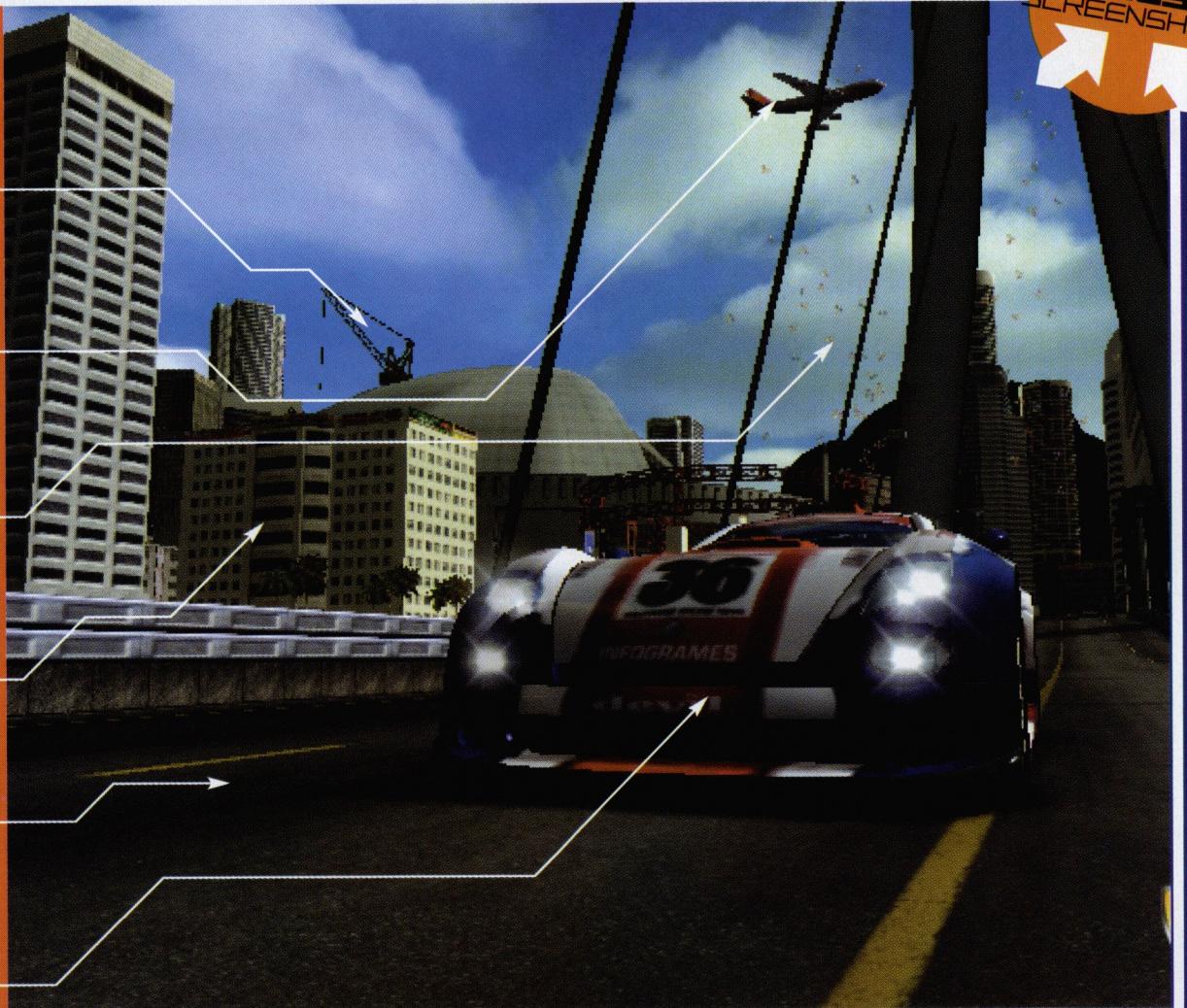
Each building has been recreated in amazing detail and reflects the different theme of each location.

>> ROADSIDE

Real-time shadows and distortion effects help each track look photo realistic as you're racing.

>> DREAM MACHINE

Each car has its own unique look and set-up, which will directly affect the way it handles.

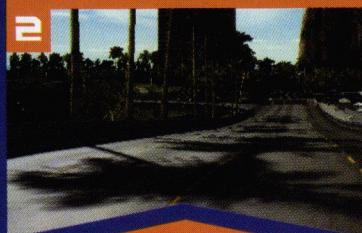


THE DETAILS >>

ROAD SURFACES look the business because of a system called Atomiser. "Thanks to this application, we can offer a detailed view of textures close to the player, right down to the size of an atom," says senior artist Marco Spitoni.



1



2

SHADOWS CAST on the track do create a good sense of speed and depth. But as well as these, several distortion effects have yet to be included by Milestone that will hopefully enhance these feelings further.



3



4

THE DEVELOPERS didn't want to create stale racing environments, so they included lots of little details. Look out for traffic on adjacent roads, seagulls, helicopters and other elements while you're driving - if you can...



↑ Look out for other vehicles on the track when you're trying to smash the land speed record.



↑ Each location has its own distinct theme.



↑ Looks like some of the tracks are still being built...

» BONUS INFO

» SMASH IT UP

Most licensed racing games don't allow car damage, but *Racing Evoluzione* will allow you to violate the vehicles. Let's hope that it has repercussions on the handling rather than just being a cosmetic touch.

"PLAY THE GAME IN COCKPIT VIEW AND YOU'LL FEEL AND SEE THE CAR SHAKE AS IT WOULD IF YOU WERE REALLY BEHIND THE WHEEL"

» concentrate hard on taking each corner correctly if you're going to catch up.

If this is the case, you may have to consider using the slipstream of the other vehicles. All cars will be subject to air resistance and this will be measured in-game through parameters such as weight distribution and speed.

With all these elements taken into account, the driving part of *Racing Evoluzione* is shaping up to be a bit special. All the controls respond immediately to the player's actions and the resistance of the Xbox controller's triggers make it a real pleasure to control brakes and

accelerator at the same time while flying around corners at top speeds.

To get a good feel for the sense of speed in the game, all you have to do is swap from a roadster to a dream car. You immediately notice the difference, not only in speed but also in handling. And in the higher classes, there'll be no time to admire those pretty environments alongside each track. You'll be going fast.

If you play the game as it's meant to be played - using the cockpit view - you'll feel and see the car shaking just as it would if you were really sitting behind the wheel. This sensation

occurs most obviously when you hit the accelerator or brakes really hard.

Project leader Lothar Peckelsen is in no doubt that *Racing Evoluzione* is trying to advance the driving game genre - and it's attempting to do so on the only games machine capable of taking on the challenge.

"The choice of Xbox as the platform on which to develop the game was inevitable, since it's the most powerful console available and the only one that can implement such an ambitious project." Lets hope that ambition shines through in the finished product.



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REVIEWS

We pride ourselves on bringing you the very best reviews possible.

REVIEWING SETUP



WE REVIEW games on a 32 inch PHILIPS Matchline III digital TV. As well as a brilliant widescreen picture, this beauty boasts Dolby Digital surround sound and has wireless FM rear speakers. Apart from giving us all TV-insecurity when we think of our humble sets back home, it means we've got the best environment in which to play and test every Xbox game to the limit. For more info check out www.philips.com.au.

SCORE KEY

8.5-10.0

THE XBOX ELITE - ONE OF THE VERY BEST AVAILABLE

7.5-8.4

A TOP QUALITY RELEASE THAT'S WELL WORTH HAVING

6.5-7.4

STILL WORTH CONSIDERING, BUT HAS SOME FLAWS

5.1-6.4

AN AVERAGE TITLE WITH NOTHING OUTSTANDING TO OFFER

2.6-5.0

A BAD GAME, AND ONE YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T BOTHER WITH

0.0-2.5

CALLING SUCH A RANCID STINKER A 'GAME' IS LIBELOUS

THE TRUTH

WE ONLY REVIEW the finished Australian version of a game - the version that you will be paying for and playing. The US or Japanese release will often differ from its Australian counterpart. By sticking to this policy, we will never mislead you by reviewing imported games or preview versions.

Microsoft has no access to, or influence over, the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*. The company supplies us with screenshots, info and games before any other magazine. We don't do deals with Microsoft, or any other publisher, to get access to finished games. As a result, we're in the best position to give you what you deserve - balanced, objective and accurate reviews on which to base your buying decisions.

THE VERDICT

POWER

How technically adept is the game? Does it make proper use of the Xbox? How impressive is it?

STYLE

How stylish is the game? How well is each aspect of it designed? How good does it look and feel?

IMMERSION

How involving is the game? Will hours fly by in minutes? Are the controls instinctive or awkward?

LIFESPAN

How much is there to the game? How long will you keep coming back to it? Is it worth the money?

GOOD POINTS

+ WE'LL SUM UP SOME OF THE GAME'S BEST AND MOST EXCITING POINTS FOR YOU HERE...

BAD POINTS

- ...AND LET YOU KNOW WHAT'S PARTICULARLY BAD ABOUT IT HERE.

SUMMARY

This is our overall opinion of the game, condensing the review into one easy-to-digest comment.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

10 // 10

WHAT OUR BADGES MEAN

At the start of a review, along with the Game Information box telling you who's made the game, when it's out, how many people can play, and the official website address, you may see a badge or two. This is what they stand for:



XBOX ELITE
Any game scoring 8.5 or more is given our Xbox Elite award. Wherever you see this badge you can be sure a great game awaits you.



GAME OF THE MONTH
Every issue we give the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* team's favourite release the Game of the Month award.



ONLY ON XBOX
If you see this badge at the start of a review, you'll know that Xbox is the only console on which you'll be able to play that game.



ON THE DISC: PLAYABLE
This badge means that a playable demo of the game is featured on our exclusive Game Disc, so you can try it for yourself.



ON THE DISC: MOVIE
If our exclusive Game Disc includes footage of the game in action, we'll let you know with this badge.

THE TEAM



KEVIN CHEUNG //
EDITOR



DAN TOOSE //
WRITER

WITH MORROWIND a permanent fixture in his Xbox, and the *LOTR* DVD being out, Kevin's gone completely into fantasy mode. God help us if he tries to 'magic missile' us.

PLAYING: *Morrowind*, *Aggressive Inline*, *Halo*
5PM DRINK: Double bourbon and coke



JAMES COTTEE //
WRITER

INSTEAD OF having a nap in the park during lunch like the rest of us, James has been playing *Halo* and practicing his deathmatch skills.

PLAYING: *Deathrow*, *Halo*, *Conflict: Desert Storm*, *Burnout*
5PM DRINK: Stone's Green Ginger Wine



MAX EVERINGHAM //
STAFF WRITER

MUSCLEMAN MAX helped out during the recent Sydney Airport strikes by carrying crates full of luggage through the jammed departure terminals

PLAYING: *Ghost Recon*, *Madden 2003*, *NHL 2003*
5PM DRINK: Water



MATT WOLFS //
WRITER

MATT HAS finally got his Xbox back from the repair shop, and has been catching up on a month's worth of games. And since the NFL season has started, he's had no time for sleep.

PLAYING: *Max Payne*, *Desert Storm*, *Halo*, *Aggressive Inline*
5PM DRINK: Toilet Water



ASTEVEN BAILEY //
STAFF WRITER

THE NEW BEARD we told you about last month has already been deleted from Steve's face. It's like working with a living Mr Potato Head.

PLAYING: *Conflict: Desert Storm*, *Halo*, *Aggressive Inline*
5PM DRINK: Elderflower



RALPH PANEBIANCO //
WRITER

HE'S BACK from Tokyo! And my, what stories he has to tell! Like how he went broke and had to use his dashing good looks and busking skills to earn his next meal!

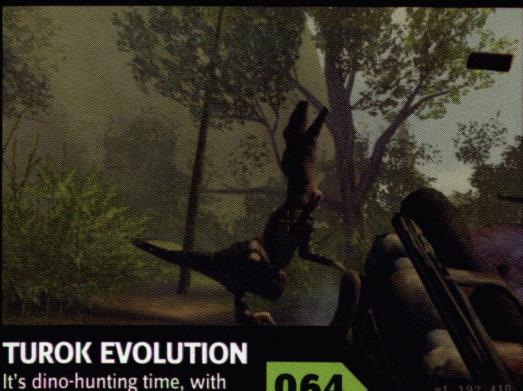
PLAYING: *Spider-Man*, *Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer*
5PM DRINK: Screwdriver



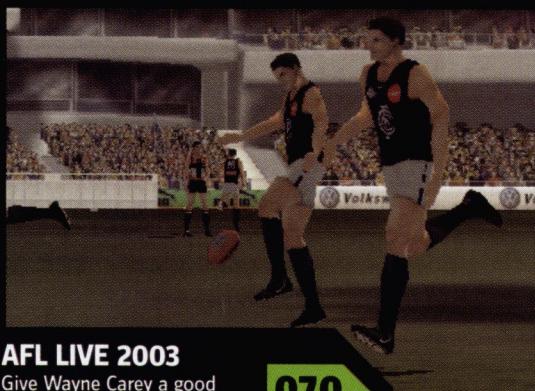
GAVIN OGDEN //
NEWS EDITOR

CONSERVATIVE estimates say that Gavin has expelled enough gas from his orifices since last September to fill the office 139 times over.

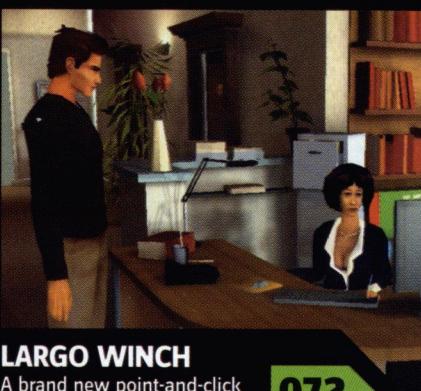
PLAYING: *Conflict: Desert Storm*, *Halo*, *Buffy*
5PM DRINK: Caffeine-Free Diet Coke

**TUROK EVOLUTION**

It's dino-hunting time, with full blood and gore!

064**AFL LIVE 2003**

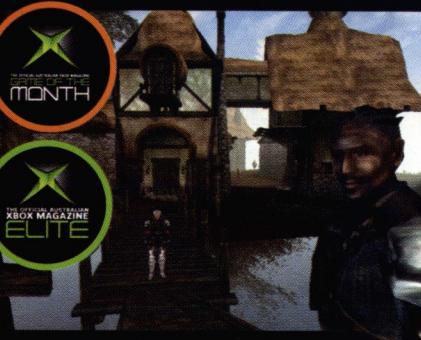
Give Wayne Carey a good stiff-arm from us.

070**LARGO WINCH**

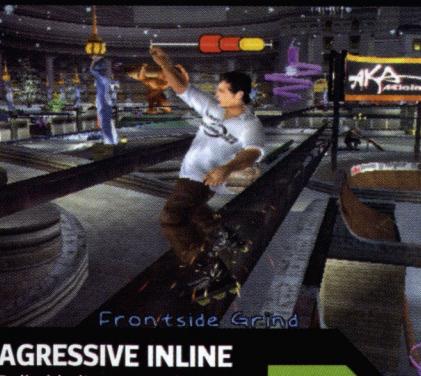
A brand new point-and-click adventure from Ubi Soft.

072**WWE RAW**

Was this game left too late? Find out why WWE Raw is a decent grappler, even if it is a few wrestlers short.

060**MORROWIND**

The Xbox's first RPG is more than just a winner!

074**AGGRESSIVE INLINE**

Rollerblading comes back into style. A Tony Hawk killer?

080**BARBARIAN**

Nothing like the 80s classic

090**CONFlict DESERT STORM**

Art imitates life imitates art...

086**ANTZ EXTREME RACING**

Hurtle along at 0.5kph!

084

»NEXT MONTH: In Issue 08, on sale October 23, we're intending to review the first wave of games from the massive Christmas onslaught. Hopefully this will mean unparalleled, comprehensive play-tests of *Hitman 2*, *Matt Hoffman Pro BMX 2*, *Madden NFL 2003*, *NHL 2003*, *The Thing*, *Blade 2*, *Quantum Redshift*, *Bruce Lee* and more! Hopefully...



↑ Have you seen the way these guys jump and flip around in the ring? Who cares if they're not really hurting each other!

Finally, a game in which to lay the smack down...

WWE RAW

WORDS: MATT WOLFS
AND KEVIN CHEUNG

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: ANCHOR INC

PUBLISHER: THQ

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 27

PLAYERS: 1-4

WEBSITE: WWW.THQ.COM



ORIGINALLY RELEASED in the US in January this year, *WWE Raw* has finally made it to Australian retail shelves with one change - what was known as *WWF Raw* in the United States is now known as *WWE Raw* in Australia and other PAL territories.

Eight months' wait and that's the only difference? So does this mean that the rosters are terribly out of date? It's a shame to have to say it, but the honest answer to both of these questions is 'yes'.

The line-up of superstars for *WWE Raw*, in the wrestling world, archaic. The absence of such dynamic new personalities as Booker T is proof enough that the roster in *WWE Raw* needed updating, and that was even before the US release which came well after the WCW buyout. For such omissions to carry over eight months later to the Australian release is, to put it bluntly, of great disappointment.

However all is not lost, as *WWE Raw* is still, at its core, a very competent grappler. Fans of the genre will find that it plays very similarly to games from the Aiki/Asmik Ace range of wrestlers on the Nintendo 64, such as *WCW/NWO Revenge* and *WWF No Mercy*.

A brief explanation, we feel, is owed to readers as to the situation with WWE games on different gaming platforms. By the time the Nintendo GameCube was released, and exclusivity rights were being demanded from it, the Xbox and the PlayStation 2, THQ decided to split up its three principle licences. The PlayStation 2 got *Smackdown*, Xbox got *Raw*, and the GameCube got *Wrestlemania*.

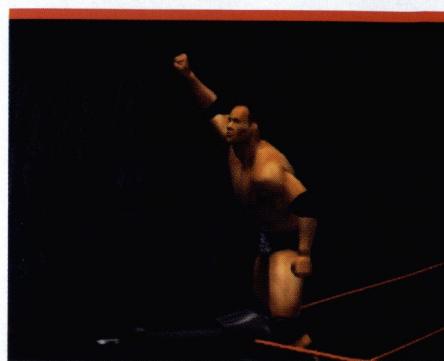
Despite the obvious and cynical observations that WWE marketing has found a very happy medium in gaining the best of all three worlds, it still leaves the Xbox with an exclusive wrestling franchise of its own - one that can certainly expand and improve >>

>> **BONUS INFO**

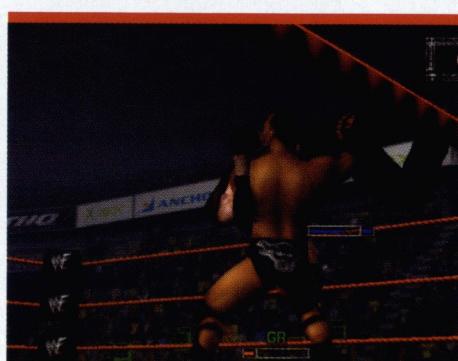
>> PRO VIEW
TRIPLE H: "Mighty cool! I think that Create-A-Wrestler thing will be pretty popular with fans."

KURT ANGLE: "I was blown away by the realism of the graphics and the entrances. Even my medals have been perfectly recreated in the game."

PLAY IT AGAIN >> The camera angles of WWE Raw



» **PLAYER ENTRY:** All the signature poses and theme music come into play as the wrestlers strut around menacingly, getting ready for the impending fight. It's about now that you dust the chips off your lap, wipe the sweat off your palms, and prepare to dish out a sound thrashing to your opponent.



» **MIX IT UP:** Standard punches and blows won't look very special in *WWE Raw*, but special moves - particularly where someone goes airborne - will produce alternate camera angles to give you that live televised effect. That sounds like a pretty good incentive to lay the smack down.



» **FINISH HIM:** Watch as the camera zooms in and out of the screen, capturing that final desperate move you make to keep your opponent pinned to the mat. Make sure you've chewed his energy bar down to nothingness to prevent him from getting up, otherwise it'll all be for nothing.



↑ "Watch out, or I'll jump up and bite your ankles."



↑ Just lie back and think of England...



↑ Kane takes a dive.



» in ways that only the Xbox can make possible. But being the *first WWE Raw* game on Xbox, there will be teething problems. The basic game provides the brutal, chest-thumping brand of wrestling that the fans know and love, with obvious improvements in some areas. But when it comes to exploiting the Xbox hardware, *WWE Raw* can be a let-down.

Visually, *WWE Raw* is in a league of its own. The wrestlers are very well detailed and modelled, with silky smooth animations and rippling, muscular flesh that appears every bit as exaggerated and larger than life as what's shown on the televised events. Throw in the roaring crowds that cheer for their favourite heroes, and *WWE Raw* becomes a game that really captures the gaudy atmosphere of the sport.

WWE personality, Billy Gunn summed it up best from both the fans' and the wrestlers' point of view: "The graphics are absolutely awesome. It's kinda weird seeing yourself in a game... Weird but very cool."

These elements come together very well in the initial stages of the game, producing some of the hands-down best star introductions ever seen in a wrestling game. They dance, they flex, they pose; the cameras swoop about their feet as the audience cheers them on. It's of some disappointment to us that the dramatic effect of these introductions can be completely destroyed by game-specific nuances, particularly where the superstars have a habit of moving around like they belong in a John Wayne film rather than the squared circle.

The meat of the game - the actual bouts - is vintage *WWE*. Whether it's a one-on-one exhibition match or a multiplayer tag-team battle, *WWE Raw* will not disappoint with its punishing and up-close gameplay.

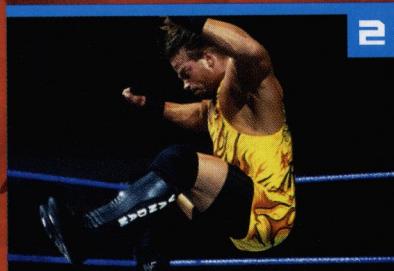
Things initially seem slow and mechanical with the basic controls. There's the block, hit and grapple, which operates on a similar 'Stone, Paper, Scissors' principle to *Dead or Alive 3* - the difference being that it's nowhere near as fast-paced. However, with a little practice of the different throws and combos, and liberal use of double-taps on the directional keypad, the muscle-bound chaos will eventually

STAR SPOTTING >>

Here are some of the wrestlers you can play as in *WWE Raw*. The better you play, the more you can unlock.



» Triple H: considered the striker of the best poses in the WWE.



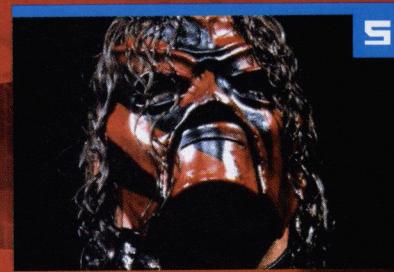
» Yes, he's 'that' guy. The guy who looks just like Van Damme.



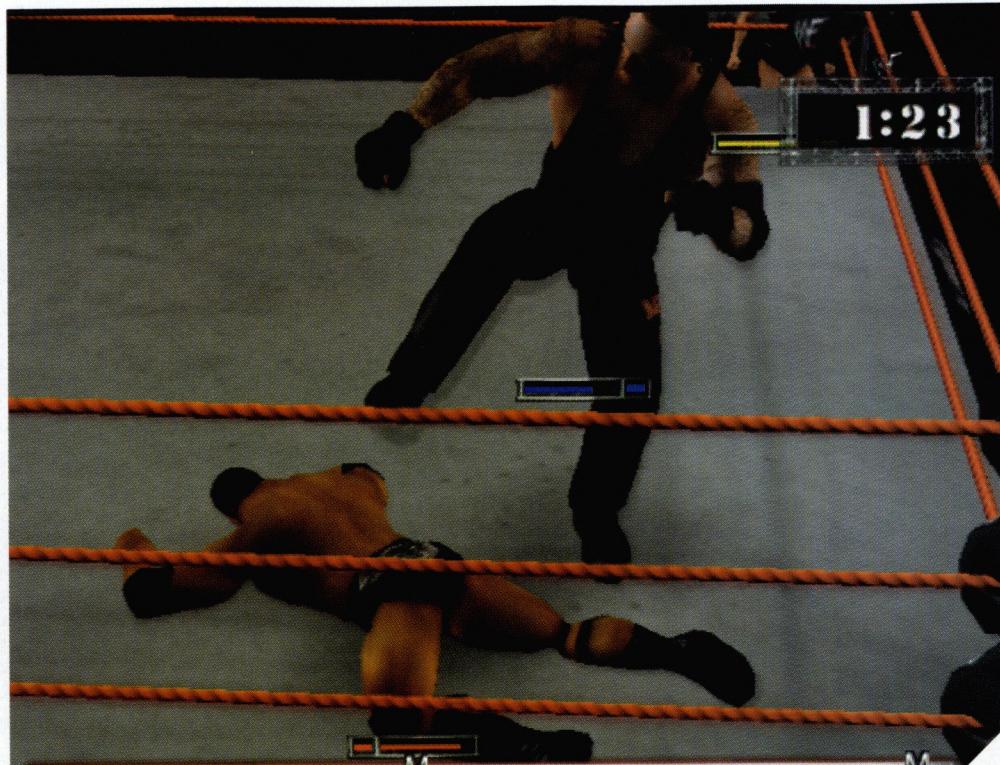
» Hollywood Hogan: Miami attire for an impending retirement? Not likely...



» Don't mess with The Rock: he also happens to be the Scorpion King!



» Kane is brutal, powerful, and he doesn't have to utter a word under that mask.



» He really left a mark on the place.

“THE TOTAL ABSENCE OF A REFEREE IS RATHER BAFFLING”

» become as carefully timed and orchestrated as the real thing. The matches can become every bit as fast, fluid and acrobatic as what you see on television, complete with dynamically shifting camera angles. It's possible to achieve a level of mastery that lets you perform small feats of entertainment like bouncing an opponent off the ropes with each hit. Being able to take the time to appreciate little effects like this is what makes *WWE Raw* so special.

Unfortunately, working up a decent rhythm is very difficult (not surprising since the opponent is fighting against you). Controls are a tad on the slow and mushy side, and the fun stuff - the daisy-chained throws and knock-downs - only comes around every once in a while. In other words, the action is sporadic and very hit-and-miss.

On the plus side, when things do start looking good, the game will throw all sorts of visual effects into play. There are slow motion effects, different camera angles, and the game will even go into a picture-in-picture mode to show off an awesome replay while the fight continues on in real time.

The picture-in-picture replay overlays are only available after performing a finishing move. It's a very nice touch, and it's only possible to pull this off if you have the crowd behind you. This is probably one of the deeper gameplay mechanics of *WWE Raw*, which offers MTV-style visual rewards in exchange for smart play.

However, the total absence of a referee is rather baffling. After all, they've become something of a bread-and-butter inclusion in the wrestling genre, particularly the *Smackdown* series.

There are other curious omissions that dull the shine on *WWE Raw*. The game is comparatively sparse on options, and we've taken particular exception to the lack of any form of Career or Create-a-PPV mode. This is

a critical stroke against *WWE Raw*'s value as a long term investment.

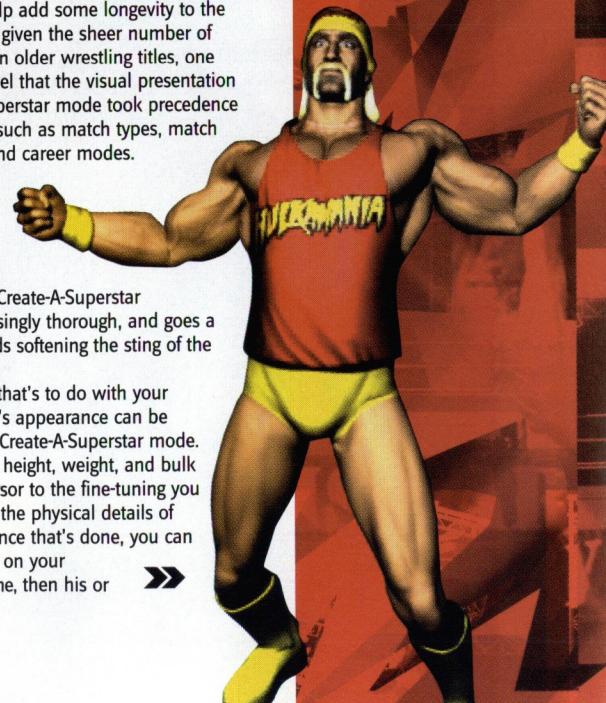
The options that are on offer, however, aren't anything to snuff at. There are standard one-on-one exhibition matches, tag team, triple threat, fatal four way, battle royal, handicap and tornado matches. There are also title matches for the Heavyweight, IC, European, Hardcore, and Women's divisions.

There's also a King of the Ring mode, which could theoretically serve as an alternative to a Pay-Per-View mode; but for many fans, this could feel more like a token inclusion to the game, especially given the ability to create a Pay-Per-View of your own in other wrestling titles.

The ability to collect bonus items during the game, such as Kurt Angle's medals, or various hats, glasses and other ringside objects, does help add some longevity to the game. However, given the sheer number of choices offered in older wrestling titles, one can't help but feel that the visual presentation and Create-A-Superstar mode took precedence over vital areas such as match types, match customisation and career modes.

The one major saving grace of *WWE Raw*, however, is the incredibly comprehensive Create-A-Superstar mode. It's surprisingly thorough, and goes a long way towards softening the sting of the lacklustre roster.

Everything that's to do with your custom wrestler's appearance can be modified in the Create-A-Superstar mode. Customising the height, weight, and bulk are but a precursor to the fine-tuning you can perform on the physical details of your wrestler. Once that's done, you can then go to work on your wrestler's costume, then his or

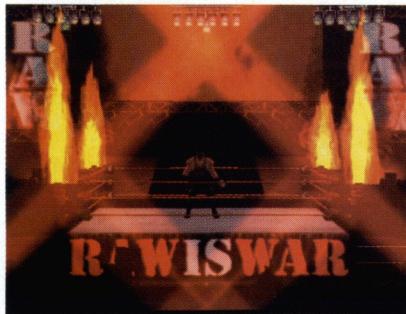




↑ Bright flashing lights, pyrotechnics, music - it's just like watching it on television!



↑ Go on, pick The Rock. Everyone loves him.



↑ Welcome to Hell. No wait...



↑ Too bad you can't use the bike...



↑ Kurt Angle, back when he still had hair.



↑ The masked one is silent but violent

"YOU CAN COMPLETELY CHOREOGRAPH YOUR CUSTOMISED SUPERSTAR'S ENTRANCE"

BONUS INFO

» **KANE'S GAME**
During a recent visit to Sydney just before the Global Warning Tour, Kane came up with a brilliant idea for the next WWE Raw title: wrestling on top of the Empire State Building, and being able to throw your opponents over the edge! You've got to admit, that sounds like a pretty damned good idea!

BONUS INFO

» **MORE GLOBAL FUN**
Mark Henry was also in Australia for the Global Warning Tour, playing WWE Raw at the pre-match conferences. He loved the game so much that he had a copy of the game brought up to his hotel room, where he then proceeded to play it for the next eight hours. "It was like being in the ring, but without the exhaustion."

» her theme music; and for the finishing touch, you can completely choreograph your customised superstar's entrance, right down to the lighting and pyros in the arena, as well as what signs are being held up by the fans while they're competing in the ring.

If you're feeling creative enough, the Create-A-Superstar mode is fantastic way to bring the WWE Raw roster screaming into late 2002. It's also - as we suspect the game was originally intended - to let us bring back some old favourites like Andre the Giant and watch them mix it up with the likes of The People's Champ, The Game or The American Fat... sorry, Badass.

WWE Raw is an above average wrestling title. Yes, it's disappointing that it's being released so late; and yes, had it not been out so late after the US release, the outdated roster might've been a little more bearable. These are unavoidable but realistic criticisms. However, you shouldn't let that taint your impression of the solid gameplay. When it comes down to it, WWE Raw has all the weapons to make it a potent wrestling experience, with the ground work laid for future editions of the game to be even better. WWE Raw is the best wrestling game available on Xbox, and any Xbox-owning WWE wannabe could do a lot worse than check it out.

THE VERDICT

POWER

The best looking wrestling game ever by a huge margin. Slick and smooth to watch.

STYLE

Colourful, authentic-looking (bar the roster), and with great television-style presentation.

IMMERSION

A thumping soundtrack with chunky, painful-sounding effects thrown in for good measure.

LIFESPAN

Short but sweet. And WWE Raw will be entering the ring in 2003 anyway.

GOOD POINTS

- ▲ DYNAMIC CAMERA ANGLES
- ▲ SOLID, ALL-ROUND WRESTLING GAMEPLAY WILL PLEASE THE FANS.

BAD POINTS

- OUTDATED ROSTER OF WRESTLERS
- LACK OF PPV AND CAREER MODES

SUMMARY

A decent grappler which would have made a far grander entrance had it been released earlier this year.

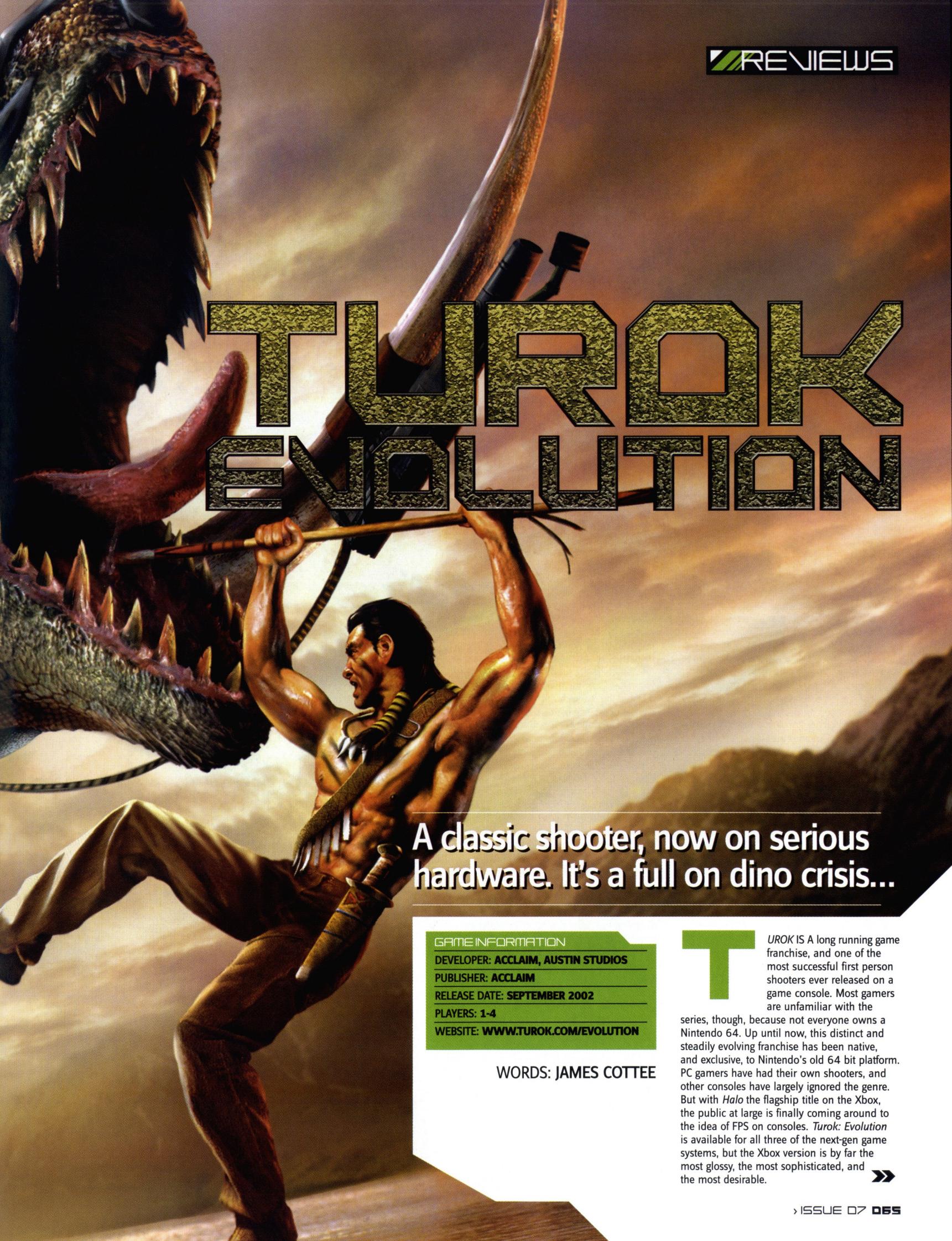
OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

7.7 // 10

» PREVIOUSLY: First Look - Issue 05, page 010

» COMING SOON: Hints & cheats





TUROK EVOLUTION

A classic shooter, now on serious hardware. It's a full on dino crisis...

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: ACCLAIM, AUSTIN STUDIOS
PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2002
PLAYERS: 1-4
WEBSITE: WWW.TUROK.COM/EVOLUTION

WORDS: JAMES COTTEE

TUROK IS A long running game franchise, and one of the most successful first person shooters ever released on a game console. Most gamers are unfamiliar with the

series, though, because not everyone owns a Nintendo 64. Up until now, this distinct and steadily evolving franchise has been native, and exclusive, to Nintendo's old 64 bit platform. PC gamers have had their own shooters, and other consoles have largely ignored the genre. But with *Halo* the flagship title on the Xbox, the public at large is finally coming around to the idea of FPS on consoles. *Turok: Evolution* is available for all three of the next-gen game systems, but the Xbox version is by far the most glossy, the most sophisticated, and the most desirable.





▲ Flame on - *Turok Evolution* gives you bigger baddies, and bigger weapons to blast them with.

» *Turok: Evolution* is the latest installment in the *Turok* saga, a well-developed game universe where humans are at war with inter-dimensional reptilian invaders. The title of *Turok* is sort of like "The Phantom," a rank bestowed once a generation on the one deemed most capable of defeating the alien menace. *Turok*'s clan of dinosaur hunters are native Americans, honest Injuns who want nothing more than to live at peace with the natural world. No family can sleep safe in their teepee while humanoid reptiles are enslaving red-blooded Americans, so it's *Turok*'s job to put paid to these perennial pests.

The primary game mode is a single player first person shooter. As Tal'Set, heir to the onerous *Turok* legacy, you begin the game in epic combat with your arch enemy, a Yankee by the name of Captain Tobias Bruckner. This cathartic battle is put on hold as a wormhole sucks you into a prehistoric world called the Lost Land. This backwards zone of the universe is the domain of the evil Lord Tyrannus, who commands an army of equally evil lizard men. The tiny human population of the Lost Land is being marginalised by Tyrannus, and the righteous *Turok* is their only hope. Your mission is to purge the lizard man menace and free your people.

So goes the plot as depicted in the cut scenes. The game itself is a little more down to Earth, with simple, comprehensible objectives, and concrete entry and exit points. Your enemies are potentially anything with a pulse, and your most valuable weapons include your eyes and ears. Stealth is a key component of every mission, and you can't afford to put a foot wrong, not when dumb animals and smart soldiers alike are after your blood.

But payback is sweet. The weapons available throughout *Turok: Evolution* are

upgradable, outlandish, and utterly satisfying to unleash. The basic pistol upgrades to a sniper rifle, but there are much bigger BFGs vying for your attention. The minigun alone has got to be a first in the realm of video gaming. Rather than one set of rotating barrels, it's got three mini-gatling guns, all of which in turn rotate around a central axis. There are thousands of polygons just invested in that one weapon, but to see each individual barrel slowly start to spin as it warms up is to know it's CPU power well spent.

Similarly, the flamethrower and missile launcher options are overpowered, comical, and utterly destructive. There's no way in the world a mortal man could heft all of this gear around, but that kind of impossibility only adds to the appeal. Blasting multiple foes from their entrenched positions is a great way to let off steam.

The variety in the level designs is exceptional. They vary from dense rainforest to sparse industrial settings, from bleached desert to rooms full of crates. Each demands different tactics and weapons, and feels entirely different to the last. Most of the time you'll be alone, but some levels will see you fighting side by side with the human resistance, with the elaborate squad based AI working for you for a change.

Most striking is a gameplay feature that the creators of *Turok* have wanted to include from the very beginning of the series, and have only now encountered game hardware that's equal to the task. Some levels will put you in the saddle of a tame Pteranodon, a flying dinosaur. These intense, arcade like levels are reminiscent of *Panzer Dragoon*. The pace is ramped up from the rest of the game, but the stakes are just as high. The sky is



▲ Tyranny wrecks. Blast those bipeds!



▲ He'll look great stuffed in the living room.



▲ Looks like they want to play.



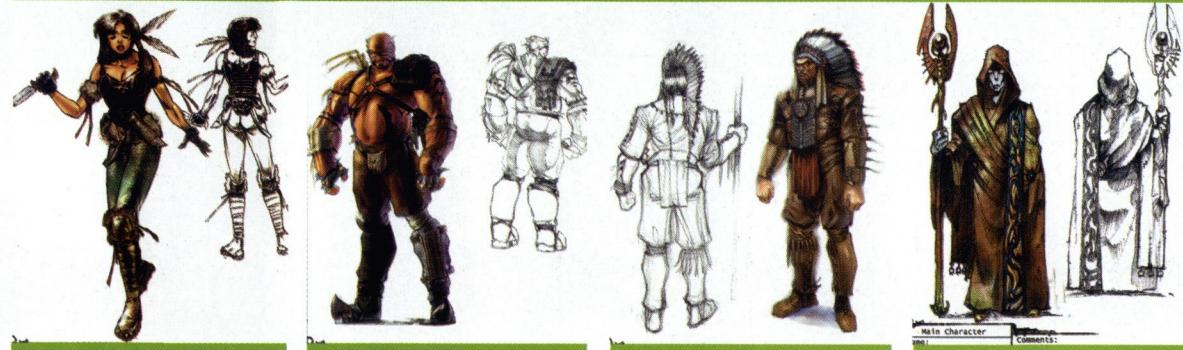
▲ That's right, skippy. You're next.



GET LOST ➤ Your guide to the people and creatures of the Lost Land

ACCLAIM STUDIOS AUSTIN put a great deal of work into visualising the *Turok* universe. They designed dozens of different species of dinosaurs, created a cast of epic characters, and devised some devilish new weapons. Here's a sample of what to expect...

THE GOOD GUYS



» MAYANA

Shaman, healer, huntress, Mayana is a newcomer to the River Village. Could be the ying to Turok's wan ... I mean, yang.

» DJUNN

First among the warriors of the River Village, Djunn is the leader of the human resistance in the Lost Land. He's got your back.

» GREY BEAR

The leader of the Saquin Nation, the people of Tal'Set, and Turok. He gets shot in the opening sequence, but his legacy lives on.

» TARKEEN

Seer, wise one, medicine man. Tarkeen brings Tal'Set back from the edge of death, and guides him towards his destiny.

Main Character

Comments:

THE DINOSAURS



» PARASAUR

Most of the wildlife in the Lost Land is relatively harmless. They mull about in groups waiting to get eaten by larger dinosaurs. Try to leave them alone.



» TRICERATOPS

Of course, even plant-eaters are driven by strong maternal instincts. If you see a baby triceratops, chances are its mum is charging up behind you, itching to gore. Beware.



» TYRANOSAURUS REX

These guys strut about like they own the place. Just because their head is bigger than your car, there's no need to be intimidated. Just shoot them a lot. With your bigger guns.

THE WEAPONS



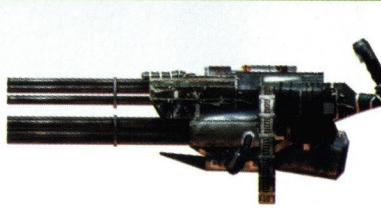
» ROCKET LAUNCHER / SWARM BORE

Your basic rocket shooting, splash damage inducing weapon. Upgrades to the swarm bore, a flesh burrowing homing weapon.



» SHOTGUN / QUAD SHOTGUN

Nothing like a whiff of grapeshot, eh? Fires titanium pellets over a wide area. Upgrades to the quad shotgun, to quadruple your fun.



» FLECHETTE GUN / MINIGUN

As the flechette gun, this weapon can fire silently and/or underwater. It upgrades to the minigun, the last word in shooting hot lead.



» FLAMETHROWER

For a king sized barbecue, roast your dinosaurs with this jumbo Bic lighter. Upgrade it to fire globs of napalm.



» TEK BOW

Live out your *Rambo III* fantasies with this high-tech recurve number. Fires regular, explosive and poison-tipped arrows.



» WAR CLUB

This nasty looking tomahawk is your basic, out-of-ammo weapon. It's far from harmless though, and is great for splitting skulls.

» BONUS INFO

» MONSTER MASH
Turok: Evolution is set in a living, breathing world. Light filters through the tree tops, grasses rustle in the breeze, and prehistoric creatures frolic in their natural habitat.

If you've ever seen a nature show, you'll know that animals don't live together in peace and harmony. No, they act like, well, animals. This effect is simulated to an almost chilling extent. Predators move in packs, hunting smaller, weaker species for food. They can be dopey herbivores, they can be primitive mammals, and they can be you. Yes, you. That rustle in the grass behind you isn't the wind, it's a pack of raptors who are after some lunch. There's no button on the controller to reason with the little buggers. You just have to give them a lesson in natural selection.

CHOOSE >>

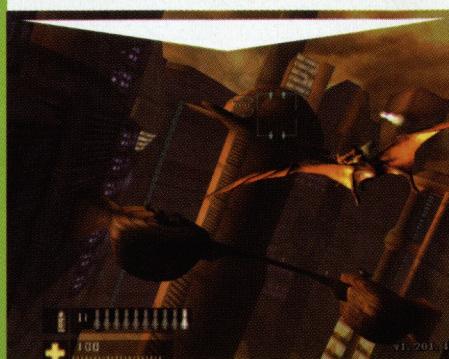
>> THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The rolling countryside of the lost land is no picnic. Think like a hunter, or die.



>> FLIGHTS OF FANCY

Riding a pteranodon is fast, deadly, and quite a rush. One false move, and you die.



>> CLOSE QUARTERS

This is more in line with your classic FPS action. Kill the enemies, and try not to die.



▲ *Turok* is a no-holds-barred, shoot from the hip kinda game. This guy's got the right idea.

"SEVERED LIMB STUMPS GUSH CLARET LIKE A RUPTURED 5 LITRE CASK"

>> full of flak, enemies are both in the air and on the ground, and false moves invite a plummeting, bloody death.

Aerial combat is dangerous, sure, but the rush is incredible. Like everything else in the game, the leathery bird performs realistically. One can flap and soar slowly, or draw the wings in to launch into perilous power dives. With weaponised brachiosaurs cluttering the otherwise cavernous levels, it becomes a bit like the Battle of Hoth in *The Empire Strikes Back*. You can blast away at the turrets on top of the dinos, bearing down like a madman only to swoop under their bellies at the last minute. These levels are well-rounded enough to be a game in themselves.

The graphics are luscious. The lighting plays off the textures a treat, making every object and structure look nigh on perfect. The rocks look like rocks, the grass looks like grass. The weapons in your hands rise and sink with your breathing and walking, and glisten in all the right places. Everything makes appropriate sounds as well - slamming your default tomahawk against a hard surface will sound completely different to thwacking it against the body of a deceased enemy. The story goes that the game designers took a beef carcass stuffed with a microphone to a rifle range to get authentic sounding impacts from live bullets. Regardless, the sound effects in *Evolution* are spot-on, giving gruesome feedback to your murderous mission.

The realism doesn't stop there. Whack an opponent with the blunt end of anything, and a sickly red stain will spread across it. Shoot the corpse to see it further decay. If there aren't too many enemies on a level, the bodies can hang around for some time, ribs exposed, rotting away in the harsh pre-historic sun.

Brutality is central to the game of *Turok*, and while it's normal for games to have excesses of death and destruction, this is really taken to the limit in *Evolution*. The enemies aren't zombies or aliens with fake looking gizzards. Their blood and guts are red - red as a Labor voter. Red as your eyes after an all-night game session, and the rising sun that greets you. Blood flies about in all directions when your shots hit home, putting mist in the air, staining the walls, threatening to gush out of the screen and ruin the carpet. Severed limb stumps gush claret like a ruptured 5 litre cask. It's all quite striking, overwhelming, and certainly not for the littlies. >>

>> BONUS INFO

>> SECTION AND LOT
Your enemies in *Turok: Evolution* are intelligent, devious, and work as a team. The dumb animals are bad enough, but the humanoid lizards actually communicate with each other. Be on your toes!

>> ONLY IN TEXAS
The guys at Acclaim Austin love their guns. Even by Texan standards, their obsession is a little... unhealthy. The sound guy on *Turok Evolution*, aspiring to get the most authentic effects possible, went around town dropping guns on different surfaces to get the exact sound they'd make. It was in the name of art, but the cops didn't see it that way. They hauled him off to the slammer, and his fellow programmers had to bail him out. If you thought computer science was boring, think again.



↑ "They cut the power? What do you mean they cut the power?! They're animals, man!"

» Seriously, the game earns its MA rating before the opening sequence is over. A reptilian soldier, slacking off on duty, hears a slight buzzing sound. He pauses briefly to clutch at a dragonfly, crushing it in his scaly hand. He chuckles, and we already feel like we've got to know him. Then hears another buzzing sound, and we see Turok's tomahawk spinning through the air. Before the soldier can reach for his gun, the stone axe has split his skull open. Red stuff vomits over out of the wound, and his jaw is rudely severed. The camera zooms out, showing that his life juices have stained the logo of the game.

It sets the mood for the game quite succinctly. A moment's lapse of concentration in *Turok Evolution* is all it takes to be demoted to the bottom of the food chain. And everything that can pose a threat to you is made of meat. Living, breathing, thinking meat that cares only for its own survival, but meat none the less. Meat that can fall prey to your ranged attacks, that can be crushed by falling trees and columns of rock. Meat that flexes and glistens in the light, and yields to crunchy, squelchy sound effects once defeated. About the only thing you can't do is cannibalise defeated enemies for a health boost.

Game designer David Dienstbier is well aware of his own mortality, and his love of guns and meat are the hallmarks of all proud Texans. What's more, he professes to only eat meat he hunts down and kills himself, and with this in mind the game design of *Turok* begins to make a lot more sense. Guns are cool, and firing them is cooler. Add the threat of imminent physical harm, and only limited perception of your surroundings, and the adrenaline rush is incredible. Anyone who's ever played paintball

skirmish knows what that's all about. The stabbing pain of being blasted by paintball pellets only heightens the thrill. The lingering bruises and welts are another matter, but the game can be forgiven this oversight.

The biggest criticism most people will be able to bring to bear against *Turok Evolution* is that it isn't *Halo*. An obvious point of contention, and no small thing. *Turok* plays very differently to *Halo*. The most obvious way this shows itself is the erratic and unpredictable movements of some enemies. Often they'll duck behind you and stay there, hammering away at your health while you spin about in vain with your ankles being eaten alive. It's quite a step down in artificial intelligence as the lizard men move about inconsistently, sometimes waiting till you're three feet away from them before deciding to run for cover, or even running into open ground after hearing a shot. These are seriously deflating moments that will detract.

Perhaps the biggest difference is that while *Turok: Evolution* was optimised for the Xbox, and looks better on Xbox than any other platform, it's not exclusive to the system. Sure, the textures are pretty, and the environments huge and detailed, but there could have been more. This game was also designed to run on the Gamecube and the PS2, and the limitations of those machines shaped the game's final form as much as the Xbox's strengths. The scope of the game is amazing, but it was all designed so it would run (barely) on the paltry 32MB of RAM on Sony's black box.

Turok Evolution is a visceral shooter and a difficult game, one that'll fight you every step of the way. If you want a challenging FPS, you could do a lot worse.

 THE VERDICT

POWER
Lush textures, clever enemies, and meat so real you can taste it.

STYLE
Techno-tribal fusion in the land that time forgot. Brash, brutal and distinctive.

IMMERSION
Brush up against the wrong shrub, and the enemy soldiers will spot you. It's easy to get sucked in.

LIFESPAN
Heavy single player game supported by decent multi-player.

GOOD POINTS

- + STUNNING GRAPHICS AND SOUND
- + IMMERSIVE GAMEPLAY.
- + HUGE VARIETY OF SETTINGS AND OPPONENTS.

BAD POINTS

- STEEP LEARNING CURVE.
- QUESTIONABLE AI.

SUMMARY
An full-on, gory, but slightly inconsistent shooter that will reward studious play with a bloody assault on the senses.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

7.8 // 10

» COMING SOON: Tips - Issue 06
» PREVIOUSLY: Incoming preview - Issue 01, page 22





With any luck, the ball will curve perfectly through the uprights.

A home-grown sport gets a home-grown game. For top quality gaming, why not try Australian made?

AFL LIVE 2003

WORDS: JAMES COTTEE

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: THE IR GURUS

PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2002

PLAYERS: 1-4

WEB: WWW.AFL.COM.AU

IT'S NOT UNUSUAL these days for games to be developed in Australia. Our weak dollar has seen foreign capital flood into our local game industry, allowing us to churn out American looking games for the world market. What is unusual is that a uniquely Australian institution gets the video game treatment. It's one thing to appear on a set of Weet-Bix cards, but for an Aussie sport to join the ranks of multi-million dollar video games is something else.

AFL Live 2003 is the most detailed, most expensive, and most authentic Aussie Rules game ever made. Melbourne Developer IR Gurus worked closely with the AFL organisation to make a game that looks and feels as much as possible like the real thing. And the results are amazing. Each stadium is recreated right down to the papers by the fire exits. Every player's build and features are modeled on their real life appearance. And each of the proud AFL teams is represented by their authentic livery and rabid fans.

AFL, or as the Victorians call it, footy, is a complex game. It's fast moving, with no bothersome scrums to slow down the action. The highly regimented team positions ebb and flow, and the game has captured this essence of play quite succinctly. The ease with which the game appears to recreate the action comes down to a lot of number crunching, something the Xbox excels at. *AFL* doesn't play like any other game, and the developers had to create brand new AI routines to simulate it.

The recreation of the players doesn't end with their appearance; each has a huge bank of statistics compiled to dynamically determine their performance on the fly. If any player on your team tries to mark, punch, kick, or tackle, their personal game history will be reflected. It's still within the player's power to change the tide, though. Play a team for a whole season, and your own wins can bump up the team as a whole.

Even the ads are a refreshing change from the usual inoffensive rubbish you see in these games. Billboards around each stadium are for such down-to-earth products as Puma, Brumby's, EB, and Big W. There are also a lot of adverts for Carlton Draught, an authentic touch, but one that could be called into question in a >>>



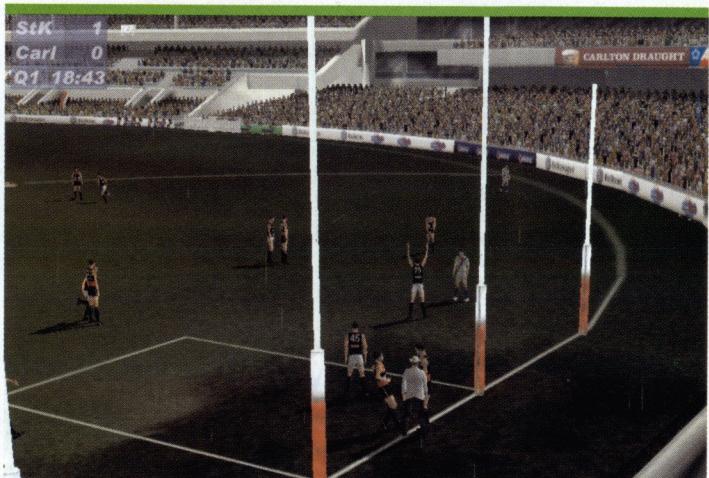
↑ He likes football, we like football, they like football, we all love AFL.



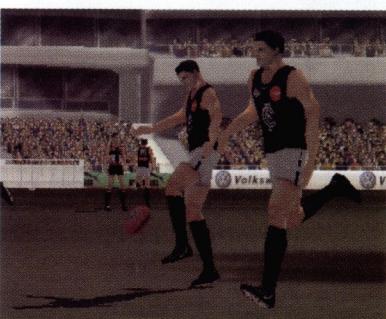
↑ Someone should have told them that Italy aren't playing.



↑ "I want a good, clean fight. No biting, no gouging, no funny stuff."



↑ "Has anyone made the pole joke yet?"



↑ Every player looks different. Honest.

» game that's going to be played by children. To be fair, the same could be said for the game in real life, or any other sporting event. Besides, kids these days don't need any encouragement these days to start drinking, and at least it's for a local beer, not that imported rubbish.

About the only facet of the game that isn't Australian made is the music. Not that there's anything wrong with it - Swedish skate rockers Millincoln do a fine job of setting the mood and pumping the blood. But there are plenty of local acts that could have done the job equally well. Perhaps some New Waver, or better yet, TISM, performing their underrated song "Shut Up, The Footy's on the Radio." The Melbourne rock scene will just have to weather the rejection. It's definitely something to be addressed in *AFL Live 2004*.

This is clearly a first-generation product, and any issues with the game lie with it being the electronic equivalent of a first draft. Not everything is as smooth as it could be: the character animations don't always sync up perfectly, and the voiceovers vary in pitch, interrupting their flow. They're not fatal flaws, but they are noticeable. Other inconsistencies appear to have been made for the sake of gameplay. Humans on the field will have four shadows from the stadium lights, but the ball only has one, making it easier to follow.

These concerns are little more than quibbles. *AFL Live 2003* plays a good game of football, and fans of the sport will find it supports every aspect of the game they love. If there's any barrier to this game succeeding, it'll be the irrational prejudice that a home-grown game won't stack up to the imported competition. Such concerns are groundless - this is a great game.

» BONUS INFO

» BIG KEV
Kevin Sheedy, legendary AFL coach, and star player in his day, was a key player in the *AFL Live 2003* design team. He brainstormed with the programmers to get every last nuance of the real game perfectly recreated on the Xbox. He then checked and re-checked their work at every stage of production. He's a man who's passionate about his footy.

» RATINGS WAR
So that players of *AFL Live 2003* get the most well-rounded AFL experience, TV commentators from both Channel 9 and Channel 10 have lent their voices to the game. Stephen Quartermain (another AFL veteran) from 10 and Garry Lyon from 9 rattle comments back and forth. They're not bad, but Roy & H.G. would have been perfect.

XBOX THE VERDICT

POWER

Player detail, behaviour, and animation are all top notch.

STYLE

The earthy feel of footy culture is captured perfectly.

IMMERSION

With every rule and nuance observed, it's easy to get sucked in.

LIFESPAN

Enough variety to keep you going until *AFL Live 2004*.

GOOD POINTS

- AUTHENTIC - TEAM COLOURS AND PERFORMANCE.
- GLOSSY, SHOWY, WITH A SENSE OF HUMOUR.

BAD POINTS

- COULD HAVE BEEN A BIT MORE REFINED.
- SOME GLITCHES AND MINOR OVERSIGHTS.

SUMMARY

A glorious tribute to Australia's own version of football. Utterly playable.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

8.0 // 10

» PREVIOUSLY: This is *AFL Live 2003*'s debut

» COMING SOON: Hints & tips



↑ Largo sets his sights on the latest range of office furniture from Ikea. Receptionist not included.

Young, filthy rich, a hit with the ladies...

LARGO WINCH

WORDS: MARIO CHRISTODOULOU AND KEVIN CHEUNG

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: UBI SOFT

PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

PLAYERS: 1

WEBSITE: WWW.UBI.COM

THE BRIEF

Third-person, static camera point-and-click adventure, starring one of those Bruce Wayne types.

SIMILAR IN STYLE to games like *Discworld* and the *Monkey Island* series, *Largo Winch* is a point-and-click adventure that puts players in the shoes of the young, wealthy, and handsome corporate CEO, Largo Winch. Just think Bruce Wayne minus the whole

Batman thing. Two security guards have been killed in Largo's Mexican research facility, and a scientist has gone missing. It is up to you as Largo to risk life and limb to uncover who's behind this before your empire - and even your life - are brought to an end.

Based on the French comic book and television series of the same name, *Largo Winch* will take you to many global locations as you gather information, interrogate the suspicious types, and complete the game's mini-challenges.

Branching conversations is one of the key features of *Largo Winch*. Each conversation will

present options that allow for more natural sounding dialogue, where you have to actually think about what you say to obtain the necessary information. Most of it is just a case of methodically whittling down all the options until you get that one vital clue out of them (which is then conveniently noted in your log), but it's a cute way of establishing the offbeat personality of the game. It's a pity the characters don't 'remember' you in the same way as in *Morrowind* (see page 074).

With less emphasis on action and momentum, more care has been taken to crafting the atmosphere of the game. The saturated, contrasting overtones of the lighting and set designs establishes the mood very well for the super sleuth exploits of a billionaire playboy. Somehow, with a brandy in one hand and an elegant brunette in the other, it seems completely natural to exchange a few witticisms about some expressionist designer artwork hanging over the fireplace, and then embarking on some undercover espionage of someone else's office space a few moments later.

Largo Winch is easy entertainment. It's light, but intelligent; high on intrigue, low on action. It comes from a genre of games that are under-represented in the console market, since its form of control and gameplay lends itself more conveniently to the mouse-friendly PC.

It still has a place on the Xbox, though, being involving enough to make the average armchair gamer think, and not just push buttons.

BONUS INFO

» LOOSE BUTTON?

One of the curious traits of the ladies of *Largo Winch* is that they all seem to be showing off too much cleavage. Gotta love the French.



↑ More ladies for Largo.



↑ Interrogate, search, then repeat.



↑ Perfect. It's all Xbox green.



↑ Comfy. Almost habitable.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Cinematic, but style takes priority over technical prowess in this game.

STYLE

Like *Melrose Place* on steroids. Largo's life revolves around money, sex and style.

IMMERSION

Twists, turns, the odd stab in the back - it's just like an interactive movie.

LIFESPAN

Not much to come back to once you finished it; mini-games provide some novelty.

GOOD POINTS

- + IMPRESSIVE ARTISTIC STYLE
- + WITTY AND SASSY
- + INTERESTING PLOT

BAD POINTS

- NO SATISFYING REPLAY VALUE
- FINDING CLUES CAN BE FRUSTRATING

SUMMARY

A niche adventure title. Great if you like games at a slower pace, but all the same it's not suited to those seeking fast action.

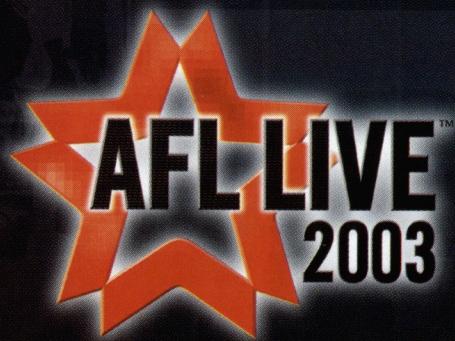
OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

7.0 // 10

» PREVIOUSLY: Mr. Winch came from nowhere!

» COMING SOON: Hints & tips

KICK IT
MARK IT
PLAY IT



Kick long bombs. **Mark** magnificent speccies. **Play** AFL Live™ 2003, the only footy game that takes you into the heart of the action. Featuring all the players and teams from the 2002 season. All with edge of your seat commentary from Stephen Quartermain and Garry Lyon. Plus tips and strategies from supercoach Kevin Sheedy.

www.acclaimau.com



PlayStation 2





↑ Players can buy and earn all forms of exquisite weaponry. Either that or this poor sod's just been tarred and feathered.

Sharpen the swords, polish those boots, and get ready for an adventure that'll take you literally anywhere you want.

THE ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

WORDS: KEVIN CHEUNG

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: BETHESDA SOFTWORKS

PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 17

PLAYERS: 1

WEBSITE: WWW.MORROWIND.COM



LIKE BOOKS, television and cinematic films, the core of every great video game is defined by its ability to inspire an audience with purpose; and without exception, this means the creation of a believable world that engages our senses, tickles our imagination, and allows us to escape the mundanity of everyday life. Some games are quick and punchy, while others - like role-playing games - are broad enough to let us exist in a life outside our own.

The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind is a rarity for role-playing games, one that takes the notion of escapism to new extremes. The game world is vast; the realms can be plundered at your leisure; your destiny is your own to forge. And as veteran game players will know, this is in stark contrast to the traditional plot-driven mould of console-based role-playing games. *Morrowind* is wholly non-linear, giving players the freedom to choose who they are, what factions they join, where they travel, and whether a mission is worthy of their attention.

"Enormous" doesn't even begin to describe *Morrowind*. Wardenfell, the sub-continent where the adventure takes place, is glittered with intricate geography, with flowing rivers, imposing mountain ranges, forests that are shrouded in mist, and scattered townships of great cultural diversity, each with their own heroes, villains and history. It is so large, in fact, it's possible to lay a trail of items from one town to another on the opposite ends of the land, and use it to find your way back and forth at any time in the game.

Setting up your character alone can take as long as 30 minutes. The simplified methods allow you to select a character with pre-set attributes, or you can design a character more to your liking by answering a questionnaire. The third method enables full customisation. Players can select their sex, race, appearance, combat proficiency, magical abilities, personality - there are thousands of different combinations. And even after that, whether you join a guild, explore dungeons, or just become a plain evil robber and pillager is entirely at your

» BONUS INFO

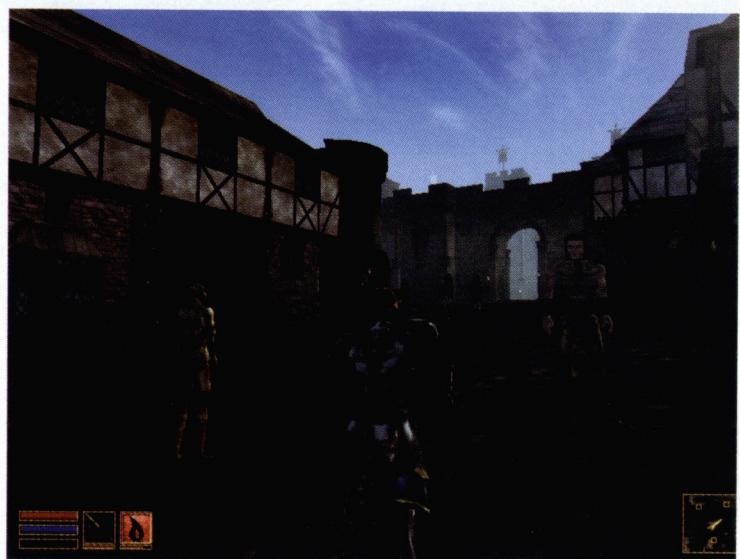
» CLICKING CAMERAS

The first-person perspective of *Morrowind* will understandably be a little overwhelming, especially since the game is so vast.

Clicking down on the right analogue stick will toggle to an over-the-shoulder third-person perspective, which solves a lot of the problems. From this point of view, *Morrowind* looks a bit like an adventure game, and will be more accessible for many players.



↑ Social divisions in Vardenfell will be apparent when talking to different races.



↑ The villagers all have something different to say.



↑ Every town has its own individual look to it.



↑ Any goods worth pilfering from this mudbowl?



↑ Stay long enough and you'll see the sun set as well.

"MORROWIND PAYS EXPONENTIAL REWARDS FOR EVERY WAKING MOMENT INVESTED INTO IT."

» discretion. The non-player characters of Vardenfell will remember your deeds, so if you happened to get shirty at a shopkeeper early on in the game, don't expect him or her to be too friendly when you come back.

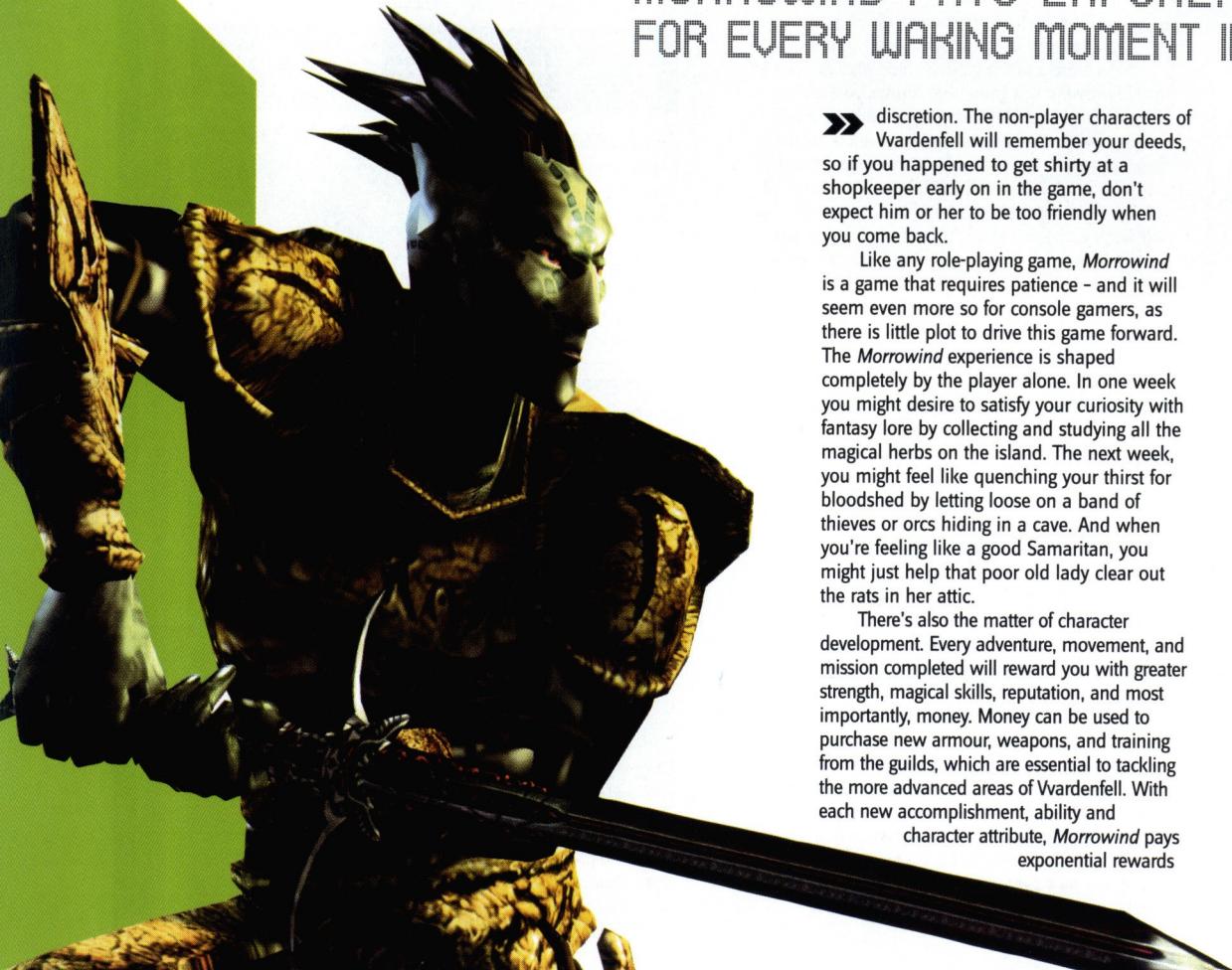
Like any role-playing game, *Morrowind* is a game that requires patience - and it will seem even more so for console gamers, as there is little plot to drive this game forward. The *Morrowind* experience is shaped completely by the player alone. In one week you might desire to satisfy your curiosity with fantasy lore by collecting and studying all the magical herbs on the island. The next week, you might feel like quenching your thirst for bloodshed by letting loose on a band of thieves or orcs hiding in a cave. And when you're feeling like a good Samaritan, you might just help that poor old lady clear out the rats in her attic.

There's also the matter of character development. Every adventure, movement, and mission completed will reward you with greater strength, magical skills, reputation, and most importantly, money. Money can be used to purchase new armour, weapons, and training from the guilds, which are essential to tackling the more advanced areas of Vardenfell. With each new accomplishment, ability and character attribute, *Morrowind* pays exponential rewards

for every waking moment invested into it. It is a game that grows on you, and it is truly a world you can lose yourself in.

Played from the first-person perspective, *Morrowind* is a game that fully immerses players into the fantasy world. As you look back at the rippling waters beyond the port town of Seyda Neen, taking your first steps on its dirt roads, and then turn to look at the majestic oaks reclining beside rustic stone buildings, there is an overwhelming sense of completeness. Time passes in real-time, with sunrises that stab beams of brilliant light through the clouds, and sunsets that bathe everything in a warm red glow. On some days, the heavens will open up and pour torrential rain upon the land. The usually instinctive response of most gamers to question the realism of a virtual world dissolves in the face of how naturally and completely this virtual world is crafted. It stands the test of credibility.

Unfortunately, the same can't quite be said of the rest of *Morrowind*. Despite having such a rich virtual environment, *Morrowind* is still very much a game, with game-specific nuances that have a jarring effect on the atmosphere. Non-player characters will always repeat the same phrase over and over each time you walk past them; characters and objects occasionally clip into each other; campaigns that are botched mid-mission can leave you permanently trapped; and combat, whilst abiding by a strict body



PICTURESQUE >

The many faces of Vardenfell

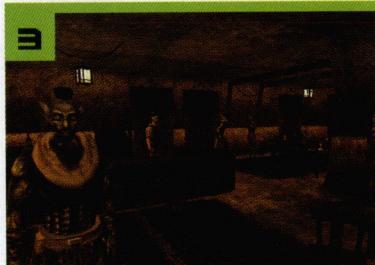
IT WOULD TAKE hours to simply walk through the entire land of Vardenfell, and *Morrowind* has the detail and variety to look unique at every turn. Here are a few of the more exotic locations in the game.



» Searching for herbs? Your quest might just lead you to beautiful statues like this.



» Some areas are impossible to see without extra light. Always have one handy.



» You'll encounter all sorts of traders and warriors at the different guild houses.



» Adventuring through the night reveals a more sublime beauty about *Morrowind*.



» Bandits and creatures could lurk at every turn in this place.



» Amazing creatures like this really add to the otherworldly atmosphere of *Morrowind*.



» There are many magnificent cities to discover



» Without friends, long journeys can be very lonely.

» rules that govern the use of weapons and magic, is just a tad clumsy at times.

Newcomers to the genre should also be warned that *Morrowind* is a game that throws you straight into the deep end. Without party members, it is a lonely adventure. The class, weapon and character development systems are also very complex; and every conversation with a non-player character will involve scrolling through a lot of text, re-reading that text from your journal, and then matching up any names or locations with your map. Tutorials are far and few between. None of this will faze experienced gamers, though, who'll appreciate the depth of *Morrowind*'s design.

There are a few more basic issues that gamers will want to consider. First, *Morrowind* isn't the prettiest game to look at. The frame rate is smooth enough, but the character models look a bit on the rough side. Some areas are also unusually dark, which is especially unhelpful when sabre-toothed nasties are hopping about taking bites out of you. Music, also, could've been much better, as the same grand but unimaginative theme plays continuously throughout. This is easily fixed by throwing in the soundtrack to *The Lord of the Rings*, which fits in quite perfectly. And speaking of which, if audience reactions to the vivid interpretations of Rivendell and Lothlorien in the *Fellowship* film are anything to go by, *Morrowind* will likewise floor you with its immense scale and creativity, which are its key selling points.

Morrowind registers as intricate, immersive and rewarding. Few games possess as much attention to detail. After the months of patience that adventure-loving Xbox owners have shown, it seems a just reward that the first fully fledged role-playing game on the Xbox also happens to be, by any measure, one of the best ever made. Ladies and gentlemen, we command you to *Morrowind*.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Large, expansive environments, and more characters and items than you can keep track of.

STYLE

Old-school fantasy. None of the characters, costumes or locations look out of place.

IMMERSION

Vardenfell and all its flora and fauna exist in a coherent, continuous world.

LIFESPAN

This game could last you a good few months. No joke.

GOOD POINTS

- + GIANT VIRTUAL WORLD
- + DEPTH OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT
- + COMPLETE FREEDOM OF CHOICE

BAD POINTS

- LONELY ADVENTURE
- CLUMSY COMBAT SYSTEM
- REPETITIVE MUSIC

SUMMARY

If you must own a role-playing game on Xbox, make it *Morrowind*. Games are rarely this good.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

9.1 // 10

» PREVIOUSLY: Issue 04, page 028; Issue 06, page 018

» COMING SOON: Hints & tips

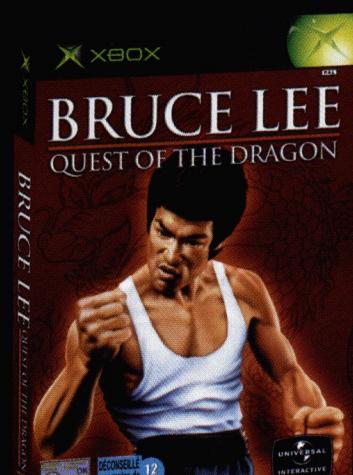
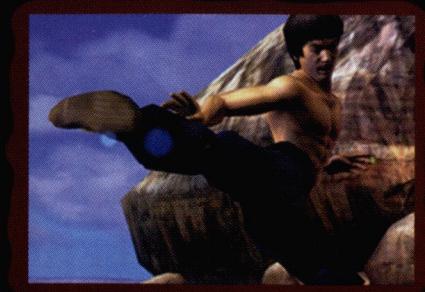


ONLY ON
XBOX

UNIVERSAL
INTERACTIVE

8 disciplines, more than
100 moves to master.

AIM FOR EXCELLENCE...
BECOME A DRAGON!



龍

BRUCE LEE QUEST OF THE DRAGON

- For the first time ever, you can fight as the one and only Bruce Lee.
- In Quest of the Dragon, motion capture technology authentically recreates more than one hundred of Bruce's Jeet Kune Do moves.
- Designed exclusively for the Xbox, it's an action-packed fighting game where you'll battle hordes of thugs in an epic struggle for survival. Get ready for a fight of legendary proportions.
- Up to 8 different styles, including :Jeet Kune Do, Thai Kwan Do, Shaolin Dragon, Kick Boxing, Kung Fu and more.
- Effectively fight multiple opponents Bruce Lee style with the enemy lock-on targeting system.
- Over 30 different enemies each with complex AI routines where enemies surprise, surround, and ambush you!
- Over 30 level areas across 3 continents of Hong Kong, England and San Francisco.

www.universalinteractive.com/bruceleegames



YET TO BE
CLASSIFIED



↑ Taz adopts multiple personas throughout his adventure thanks to the game's many costume-filled telephone booths.

Be vewy quiet, we're hunting wabbits. Err, Tazmanian Devils.

TAZ WANTED

WORDS: RALPH PANEBIANCO

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: BLITZ GAMES
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES
RELEASE DATE: TBA
PLAYERS: 1-4 PLAYERS
WEBSITE: WWW.XBOX.COM/TAZWANTED

THE SLOBBERING, spinning, incoherent mass of fur that we call the Tazmanian Devil is the star of an all new adventure, and he's bigger and better now that he has escaped the confines of his cartoon world and made his way over to the Xbox.

Taz Wanted sees our furry wild boy captured by the evil Yosemite Sam and caged in the middle of Los Angeles Zoo. To add insult to injury, Yosemite has also incarcerated the proverbial apple of Taz's eye, a sultry young creature amusingly named 'She-Devil'. Yosemite's diabolical plan is to turn Taz's home into a gigantic theme park. However, Taz breaks free from his poorly constructed cage and takes it upon himself to save both his home and his woman from Yosemite's clutches.

Yosemite's got plans of his own, though. Between Taz and his woman are four massive worlds of 'Taz Wanted' posters - signboards that Yosemite erected in an attempt to recapture the escaped mammalian tornado. If Taz is to survive, he must run, jump, spin and eat his way through 12 levels and four bosses, destroying any 'Taz

Wanted' signage he finds along the way.

Taz Wanted plays very much like any other 3D platformer you have played before. You run around, collect power ups, scavenge for tokens, find secret areas, avoid traps, jump on the bad guys... [We get the idea - Ed]. It's all standard, done fairly well; and despite being nothing genre-shaking, it fleshes the game out nicely.

The main highlight of *Taz Wanted* is the sheer size of the levels. Set in locations ranging from Zoos to Artic Ice, the game's environments are as enormous as they are amply filled with puzzles, winding paths and booby traps.

The downside is that it's much too simple. Every level starts with an introductory movie that spoons feeds you your objectives. It'll explain where they are, even 'hiring' in full detail how to complete them. This destroys a lot of the fun that would have otherwise been had in exploring the levels and getting to know them as intimately as you would the multiplayer maps in *Halo*, and it limits the game's appeal to younger audiences who need that extra bit of help.

On the upside, the game manages to retain much of the character associated with the Looney Tunes licence. *Taz Wanted* wouldn't have been able to retain its classic wacky atmosphere, nor the old-school slapstick humour, were it not for the excellent use of cel-shaded graphics. Voice acting, in that regard, is also convincing.

Taz Wanted is a fair platformer that will provide many solid hours of entertainment, but the simplicity of the game will be too much to bear for the more experienced gamers. Bar one or two minor camera and control problems, the overall package is very well polished, and worth a look for fans of Looney Tunes cartoons.

BONUS INFO

» CHOMPING FUN
Taz can consume almost everything in the surrounding environment. Flowers, rocks, planks of wood - nothing is safe. They can all be regurgitated later and spat out as a projectile, knocking out anyone who stands in Taz's way.



↑ My, what mighty incisors you have.



↑ "Strong wood! Strong wood!"

THE VERDICT

POWER
Huge levels, finely detailed and all running at a very solid frame rate. Cel-shading used to great effect.

STYLE
Classic Looney Tunes feel from the Bugs and Tweety cameos to the acme gadgets littering stages.

IMMERSION
Controls are easy to master, but a little bit fidgety at times.

LIFESPAN
Four worlds with three huge levels each. This one will take you a while to clock!

GOOD POINTS

- + CLASSIC LOONEY TUNES
- + BIG LEVELS WITH PLENTY TO DO
- + SLOBBERING...LOTS OF IT!

BAD POINTS

- TRICKY CAMERA
- FIDGETY CONTROLS
- TOO EASY FOR SEASONED PLAYERS

SUMMARY
A solid platformer that will appeal to fans of the genre. Levels are packed with things to do, but it's just a bit too easy.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

6.8 // 10

» PREVIOUSLY: Incoming, Issue 03, page 020

» COMING SOON: Hints & tips

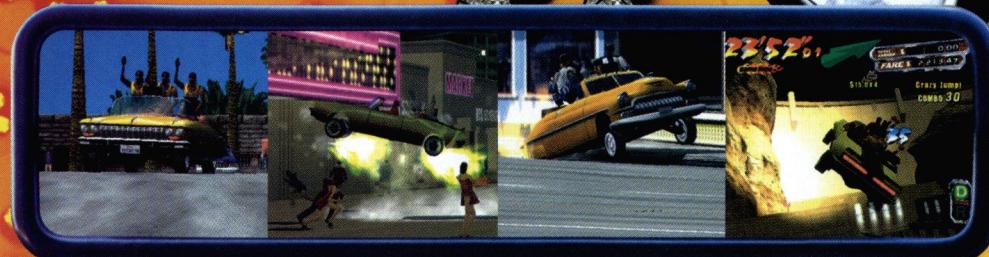
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G 8+
Low Level
Animated
Violence



▲ There are girders that span the entire width of the arena like this on every stage. Lots of points can be bagged, provided you've got mad balancing skills.

Get off your board and strap on your rollerblades for some extreme skating with 'tude, dude

AGGRESSIVE INLINE

WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY AND KEVIN CHEUNG

THE BRIEF

STRAP ON INLINE skates and perform tricks, tasks and combos to complete challenges.

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: Z-AXIS

PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM

RELEASE DATE: AUGUST 30

PLAYERS: 1-2

WEBSITE: WWWACCLAIMMAXSPORTS.COM/AGGRESSIVEINLINE

YOU TAKE A Mars bar, sprinkle in a few peanuts, and you've got yourself a Snickers (17:35). Take an existing product, add a clock or something and, hey presto, you've got a whole new commodity.

It's easy, and it happens in the world of video games with almost every (17:36) other release. Just wait until someone gets it right, producing a quality piece of highly playable software, and then mercilessly rip it off - but set the new version on the moon instead, so as not to make it too obvious.

In fact, reviews starting with rambles about

derivative, lazy cash-in video games (17:37) are becoming almost as derivative and lazy themselves. So, as you can see, we've added a clock to make our introduction text seem far more amusing and fresh than it really is (17:38).

Aggressive Inline seems, at first, to be yet another 'me too' passenger aboard the *Tony Hawk's* bandwagon of extreme sports wannabes, but after spending some time exploring the game, it's plain that ideas beyond "let's swap the skateboard for some rollerblades" have been sunk into the game.

A fair amount of thought has been given to the design of the levels and the tasks involved. Each stage has an intimidating number of challenges to complete, bonus areas to unlock and bunches of icons, power-ups and other loot to collect (see Fair Game, page 082).

The option to plump for a swift fly by of an objective is just one of the neat touches, making play a lot more enjoyable. Instead of being cryptically told to "Grind the corner of that building", you're given some explanatory text and an instructive cut-scene where the camera pans past the objects or areas that need to be tricked about with.

Granted, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* (Issue 02, 8.8) would give a run down of objectives at the start of each level, but it's not always easy to remember them, reducing you to clumsy guesswork. Considering how the objectives are handed out here, by chatting to characters or by completing other challenges, it's a helpful option to have. Especially since the stages are so large.

They're about the same width and girth as those in *Dave Mirra Freestyle*

BONUS INFO

» **BLACK EYED GIRLS**
The lady skaters feature the most ridiculously jiggly breasts yet seen in a video game, making the bosoms of *Dead Or Alive 3* look like rock-hard sandbags in comparison. They're apparently motion-captured from bodies of actual models (seriously), but that still doesn't explain their apparent eagerness to bob, wobble and tremble like a jellyfish on horseback whenever you make the slightest movement with your character.

» **LEVEL UP**
Seven levels are included for your skating enjoyment, each one rife with trick potential and stuff to do. They aren't as intricate as any of the *Tony Hawk's* titles, but do feature plenty of variety and some good ideas (see Fair Game section). Later levels are set in a cannery and a museum.



↑ See that skull burping out a rollercoaster? You'll be in there later.



↑ Wanton destruction of public property? Hey, you're no angel.

“THERE'S A DIZZYING NETWORK OF HIGH WIRES ON EACH STAGE”

» **BMX 2** (Issue 02, 7.3), and each one contains several distinct areas that would make for a level in themselves.

The Movie Lot, for example, contains not just a parking area, but a stretch of city road filled with traffic and a cavernous warehouse featuring several partially constructed film sets.

Where *Aggressive Inline* differs from *Dave Mirra* is in the actual height of the levels, and the amount of stuff that goes on in the rafters way above the ground.

Each stage features a network of criss-crossing wires at a dizzying height that need to be ground along. It makes *Inline* more of an exploration game when you compare it with most other extreme sports titles.

Even in the early levels, you'll be required to perform a series of deft high-wire grinds in order to complete some of the objectives, reaching parts of the level that you'd never expect to see. There's a lot of space to explore.

The stuff that separates *Inline* from other games based around tricks, tunes and 'tude

reads a lot like the list of additions that are intended for inclusion in *Tony Hawk 4*.

So, *Inline* is your first chance to experience such thoughtful inclusions as the spine transfer, allowing for recovery from bailing if you leave a ramp at an awkward angle (see I Gotta Be Me, right, for more of these new additions).

The Juice Bar is a feature that makes the game balance more dynamic. On one hand it rewards players for snappy play, but it affords players less time to admire the surroundings or plan a decent strategy. It's one of those devices that supposedly adds replay value - which it does - but isn't necessarily that enjoyable.

Most stunts and challenges allow you to string together an impressive necklace of sparkling combos, produce some of the most gratifying aerial trickery on the Xbox. However, there are times when the particularly tough challenges will slow the pace down to a spluttering halt, forcing players to resort to slow shuffles and rotations (which eats away at that all-important Juice Bar).

»

I GOTTA BE ME »»

How *Inline* differs from the pack



↑ SPINE TRANSFER: Always land on your feet after leaving the lip of a half pipe.



↑ MULTI-GRIND: Change your stance mid-grind to pump up the score multiplier.



↑ SWINGING: Somersault off poles and pipes to continue combos.



↑ VAULT: Fling yourself over any waist-high object for points.



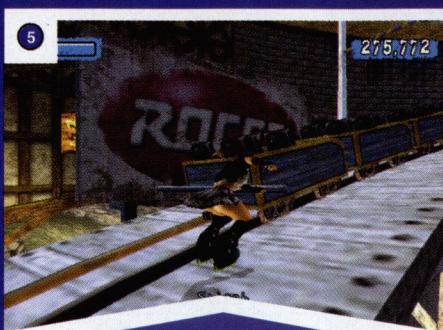
↑ SHARP TURNS: Use the triggers to turn on the proverbial penny.



Play up for the cameras, and give the nearby paparazzi something to snap, by performing a hand plant along the top of this poster board.



This clown thinks it's funny to challenge you to collect 150,000 points in a minute. Prove it's no laughing matter by completing his little task.



Don't be a stranger to danger, tag a ride behind this rollercoaster car. It winds its way through the entire level. You get a splendid view.



OPEN CHALLENGES

- 1 Dockside Grind Transfer
- 2 Break the Lanterns
- 3 Hello Inline Gap
- 4 Handplant Ferris Wheel

NPC CHALLENGES

- NPC-1 Handplant Billboard
- NPC-2 Grind Octopus Arms
- NPC-3 Jump in Path of Shark Ride
- NPC-4 50,000 Points in 1 Minute
- NPC-5 Method Over Roof Gap
- NPC-6 Grind the Ferris Wheel Wing Nut

HIDDEN CHALLENGES

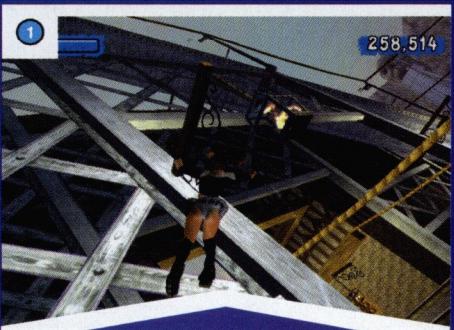
- 5 Coaster Skitch
- 6 Grind the Mime
- 7 Grind the "Test of Strength" Bell

JUICE PICK-UPS

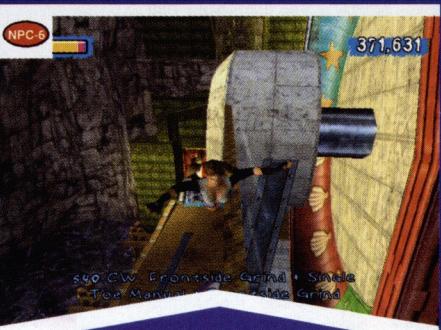
- G Green Juice Box
- P Purple Juice Box
- JC Juice Container (Extends Juice Meter)

SPECIAL

Grind Ferris Wheel Wing Nut to access this Area



Transfer over the entrance to the pier by leaping between the quarter pipes that flank it. You need speed and a good angle to make it.



Get yourself high enough and you'll be able to grind along the wires tethering the Ferris Wheel. Take the right one to grind over the central nut.



Find the octopus attraction and grind four of its arms. It's spinning at a fair rate, so you'll need to judge your approach to the ride just right.



↑ Michael Flatley had to get to the gig on time, or risk losing his house.



↑ Lining up a landing can be tricky with such crazy moves on the go.

» BONUS INFO

» NOAH'S PARK
Despite lacking a create-a-skater option, *Inline* features an elaborate Park Editor where you can lay down a veritable Eden of heavenly half-pipes and ramps. More pieces and features can be unlocked for use in the editor as challenges are completed in the Career mode.

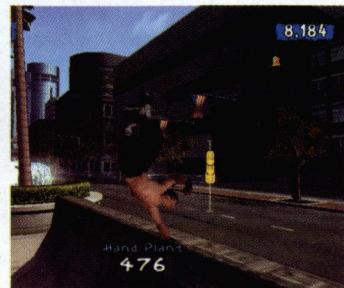
» SOS TRICKY
It's a strange oversight to have made, but the characters have no special signature moves, no super-duper multi-button Christ Air McTwists to boost their points tally. We don't miss them that much, but it does mean that you're less likely to find a favourite character.



↑ "You call that a ride?"



↑ Arrowed ramps differ from pipes.



↑ How to handle excess wind.

LOT OF LOOT

Hoard this horde

Each level has an array of trinkets and power-ups to collect. There's the key icon, which will unlock a selection of new areas for you to explore, as well as dozens of juice icons to harvest. Some of these will provide an instant boost to your juice bar, while others will give it a permanent Duracell-like extension, so you can keep going for longer.



↑ Your booty, in stat form.

"THIS IS A QUALITY, PLAYABLE GAME - A TOTALLY REFRESHING TAKE ON THE ACTION SPORTS GENRE"

» Worse still, the skaters have a tendency to bounce off walls at awkward and unpredictable angles. That being the case, there's a slight sense of clumsiness and stickiness in the controls. It's definitely slicker than *Dave Mirra 2*, but not quite as silky and responsive as *THPS3*.

Niggles aside, performing flips, grinds, slides, manuals and vaults is fine. The only trick set that causes problems is the grabbing. In a skateboarding game, you've got the board to help you land on a ramp; make sure you point it down, and you won't end up in a ragdoll heap on the sidewalk.

When you're strapped in to a pair of inline skates, you've got no such point of reference and so it's often quite difficult to land from a grab trick when your skater is contorted into a reassuringly phat, but slightly unwieldy pose.

So, is it better than *THPS3*? Academically speaking, it misses by a hair's breadth. But if your extreme sports leanings tend towards inline skating, you're answer will be 'yes'. What it's lacking now is refinement, but it's had enough thought put into it to stop it being dumped straight into Room 101 as nothing but a snack to keep you going in between *Tony Hawk's*. This is a franchise that, hopefully, and with a little work, Acclaim will build and improve.

Despite beating *Tony Hawk 4* to the punch on many new features, *Aggressive Inline* doesn't push any boundaries, and won't grab your imagination to the extent that you'd start grinding your neighbour's fence. What you get here is a quality, playable title with a refreshing take on the action sports genre.

And, as all kinds of extreme sports games are now being cobbled together, armed with nothing but a celebrity endorsement, a handful of lifestyle endorsements and bargain basement punk tunes, *Aggressive Inline* is a breath of fresh air, and highly recommended.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Levels are huge, but visuals are blocky and basic. Your Xbox isn't really straining with this one.

STYLE

The stages are different to one another, but the soundtrack is in the usual, hip-hop/nu-metal vein.

IMMERSION

Building combos is absorbing, but occasionally awkward controls annoy in the toughest challenges.

LIFESPAN

Tonnes of challenges and things to collect and unlock. Clearing all tasks on level one alone is a huge task.

GOOD POINTS

- + SOME GOOD NEW MOVES AND IDEAS.
- + OODLES AND OODLES OF CHALLENGES.
- + GENUINELY HUGE STAGES TO EXPLORE.

BAD POINTS

- JUICE METER ADDS UNNECESSARY STRESS.
- CONTROL IS A TAD OFF.

SUMMARY

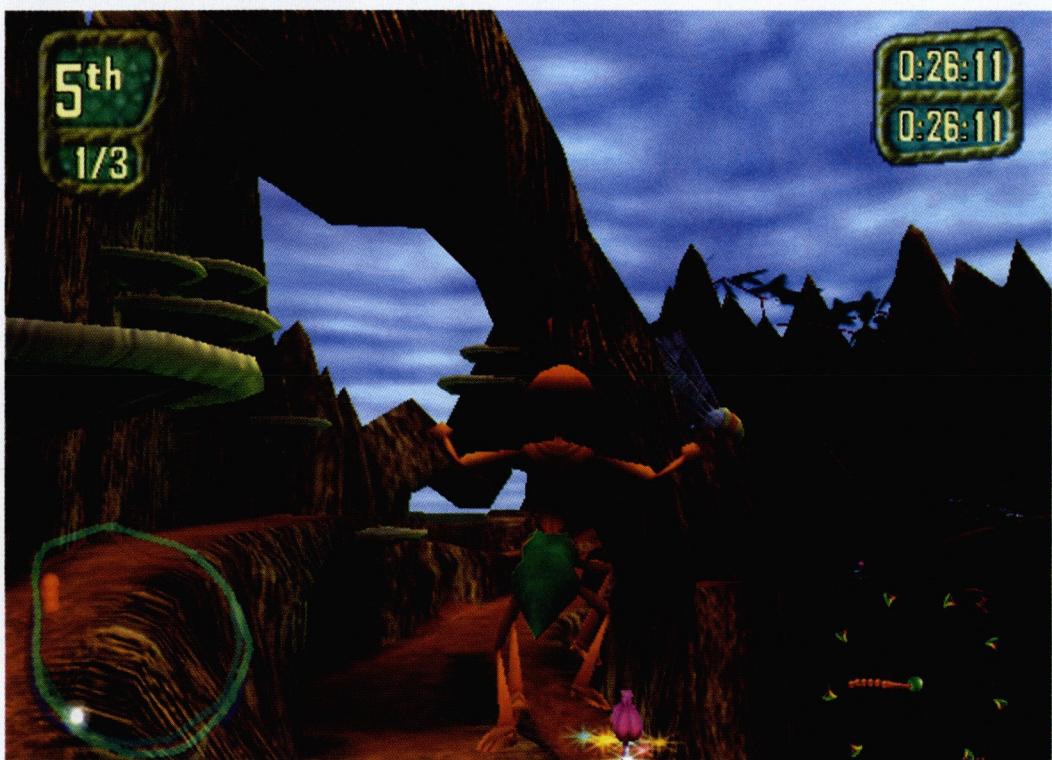
An entertaining extreme sports outing. Not the best one out there, but it contains fresh ideas and provides a lasting challenge.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

8.4 // 10

» PREVIOUSLY: *Aggressive Inline* skated in from nowhere

» COMING SOON: Playable Demo - Game Disc 08



↑ Turn right, then right, then right... The course map in the bottom left reveals a shocking lack of imagination.

Remember *Antz*? It's A Bug's Life, but browner

ANTZ EXTREME RACING

WORDS: ED LOMAS

| GAME INFORMATION | |
|------------------|--|
| DEVELOPER: | SUPersonic SOFTWARE |
| PUBLISHER: | EMPIRE INTERACTIVE |
| RELEASE DATE: | OUT NOW |
| PLAYERS: | 1-4 |
| WEBSITE: | WWW.EMPIREINTERACTIVE.COM |

THE BRIEF

Foot-and-wheel racer, based on the movie, viewed from the eye-line of diminutive insect athletes.

OH, A CARTOON kart racing game. Great. Characters from a long-gone animated movie in a hastily knocked together multi-format driving game. With some power-ups copied from the decade-old classic *Super Mario Kart*.

The video game

industry knocks titles like these out at rate of about five a month, and they're always a passable way to waste a few hours. *Antz Extreme Racing* isn't much different.

You've got a bunch of characters from the movie, each with a set number of challenges to work through. Some put you on an insect-driven kart, some on the backs of beetles. You sprint on all your little legs, or fly a wasp in others. You even 'snowboard' on a leaf.

There's certainly more variety than you

would think. The idea is to get each character up to the top rank in the whole insect world (starting from 10,000,000th place), whereby another character and their corresponding challenges are unlocked.

So there are some nice ideas. Unfortunately, actually driving an ant isn't as much fun as you might hope. Their insect chariots, for example, are just annoying. They never turn quickly enough at speed, but turn too quickly when you brake. Annoyingly, they also bounce off scenery far too eagerly.

Collecting insectoid power-ups is important if you're going to win races, but make just one tiny error and you'll speed boost into a toadstool, spin around 180° and blast off the wrong way. Then you have to battle with an enormous, race-losing, turning circle.

It's all just a bit mucky and fiddly, which is what you really don't want in a game clearly intended "for kids". The last thing kids need is bland graphics and confusing handling.

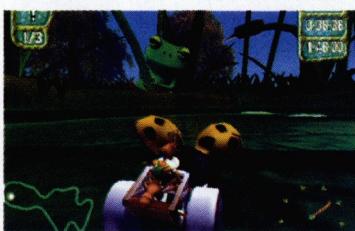
Figuring out who might enjoy this game is difficult. Film fans will find little to connect it to the movie, it doesn't handle as well as other Xbox racers, it's not friendly enough for kids, it doesn't look great and the design isn't very good. So who'd want it? Really?

There's nothing painfully wrong with it - it's just blandly average. Play it if you want. It's okay and you'll have a bit of a laugh. Just don't bother buying it when there's so much better stuff around.

BONUS INFO

CRAZY SAVING

With no auto-save, you'll want to save after every win. Stupidly, though, it takes six button presses just to save your progress. Why?



↑ Plenty of variety, but not much fun.



↑ Beware the bird with a hungry brood.



↑ Run as fast as your four feet can go.



↑ Cricket power - annoying sound effect.

THE VERDICT



POWER

Any other console could do what we see here. Does nothing to push the hardware.

STYLE

The music's kinda cool and tracey, but the game looks dreadfully pokey.

IMMERSION

Races rely too heavily on collecting every single power-up to make them really exciting.

LIFESPAN

There's an admirable number of levels, but you'll find yourself whizzing straight through them all.

GOOD POINTS

- + TRIPPY MUSIC
- + VARIED CHALLENGES

BAD POINTS

- POOR TRACK LAYOUTS
- VEHICLES ARE WAY TOO BOUNCY
- BLAND, BLAND, BLAND
- NOTHING TO DO WITH *ANTZ* THE MOVIE

SUMMARY

A completely average racing game that's just too awkward and fiddly for its knee-biting target audience.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

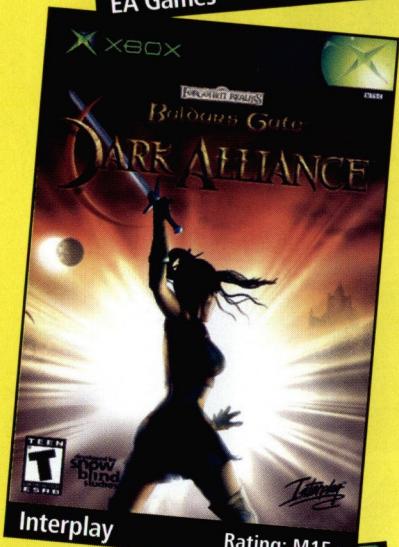
5.0 // 10

» PREVIOUSLY: Preview, Issue 05

» COMING SOON: Hints & cheats



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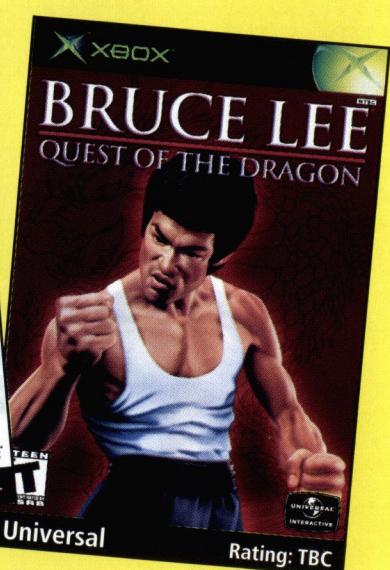
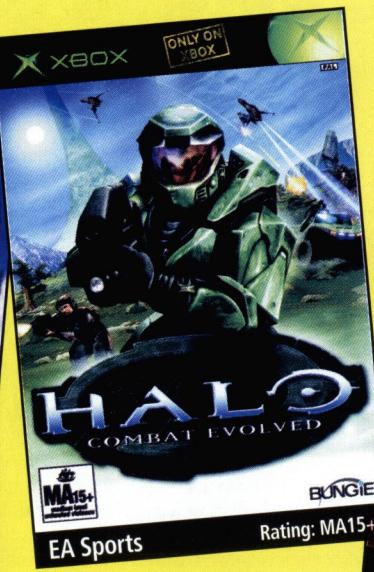
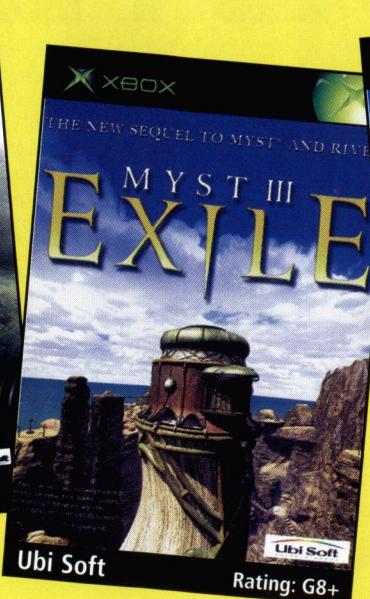
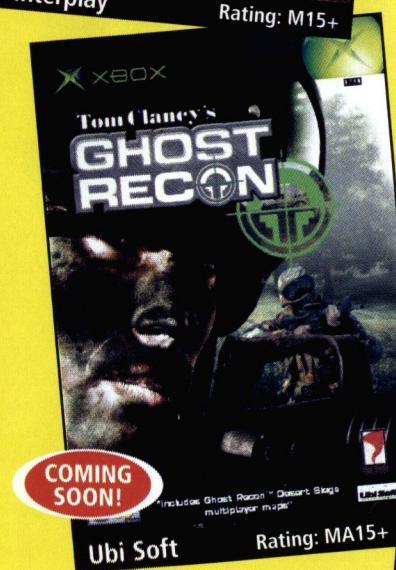


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See staff for details & latest release dates.





↑ The artwork is scrumptious, but some of the detail is sadly lost on a TV screen.

Sun, sand and captivating foreigners, but this ain't no holiday

CONFLICT: DESERT STORM

WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: PIVOTAL GAMES

PUBLISHER: SCI

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2002

PLAYERS: 1-4

WEBSITE: WWW.SCI.CO.UK/CONFLICT

THE BRIEF

TACTICAL SQUAD-based shooter. Command elite soldiers to carry out missions in the Gulf.

W

HEN IRAQ invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, the troops probably had no idea that, one day, they'd crop up as the knock down bad guys of a video game. And when George Bush Snr gave the go ahead for Operation Desert Storm on January 17, 1991, he probably didn't say "Hot dog! Bring me four of the best darn soldiers capable of carrying out the fifteen missions needed to bring this conflict to an end." But that's exactly what you get in *Conflict: Desert Storm*.

Collectively, you and your squad are the stitch-in-time that will prevent the whole dispute turning into a nuclear Warageddon by performing a crucial series of military operations. Sure, you'll have to use considered teamwork every step of the way, but this isn't one of those games that concerns itself with dozens of menus, reams of blueprints and intensive pre-mission swotting.

Although *Desert Storm* plays more like a shooter than a pure strategy campaign, progress, especially during later stages, relies heavily on your squad keeping a tight, thoughtful, and co-ordinated formation. You move team members into an advancing position one-by-one, while the rest of the squad keeps all the angles covered by laying down overlapping fields of fire. Commands are assigned through a handful of controller button shortcuts, making for an accessible control system.

But one thoughtless tactical error won't result in your team getting slaughtered; you have to make a series of concerted fudge-ups in order to be wiped out. Unlike some of the harder-core PC-based military strategy titles, *Desert Storm* isn't a game that punishes the player with a death sentence for a single schoolboy error.

For example, if one of your characters gets hit, he won't just die there and then on the spot. Instead, you have a chance to

STOP PRESS

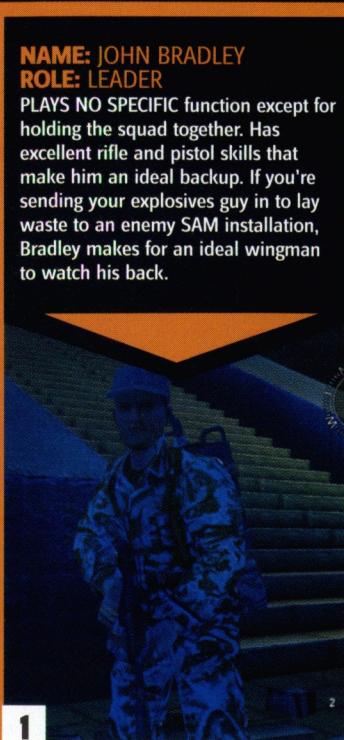
» CONFLICT SEQUELS
SCI and Pivotal Games will collaborate on two more *Conflict* games. *Conflict: Desert Sabre* is a sequel to *Desert Storm*, and is due in spring 2003. *Conflict: Missing Presumed Dead* follows four US soldiers cut off behind enemy lines during the 1968 Tet Offensive of the Vietnam war. It's tentatively dated for spring 2004.

BAND OF BROTHERS >> Military methods laid bare**NAME: JOHN BRADLEY**
ROLE: LEADER

PLAYS NO SPECIFIC function except for holding the squad together. Has excellent rifle and pistol skills that make him an ideal backup. If you're sending your explosives guy in to lay waste to an enemy SAM installation, Bradley makes for an ideal wingman to watch his back.

1

2

**NAME: PAUL FOLEY**
ROLE: SNIPER

EAGLE-EYED FOLEY is best left crouched in high ground, providing long range cover for your advancing squad. His abilities for close-quarter combat are limited as he takes several seconds to line up his sights and although you could give him a pistol, he'd probably drop it. Foley owns by far the funkiest hat in the squad.

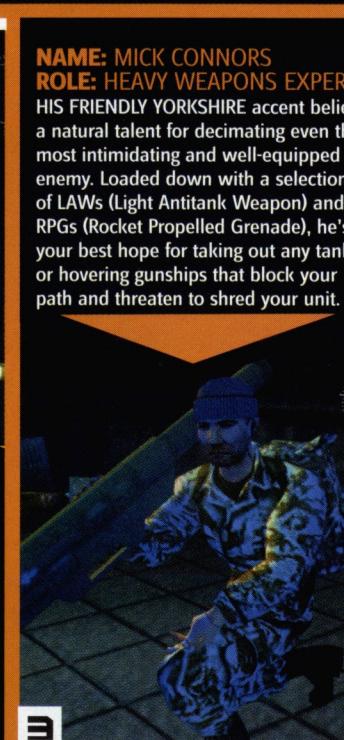
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NAME: MICK CONNORS
ROLE: HEAVY WEAPONS EXPERT

HIS FRIENDLY YORKSHIRE accent belies a natural talent for decimating even the most intimidating and well-equipped enemy. Loaded down with a selection of LAWs (Light Antitank Weapon) and RPGs (Rocket Propelled Grenade), he's your best hope for taking out any tanks or hovering gunships that block your path and threaten to shred your unit.

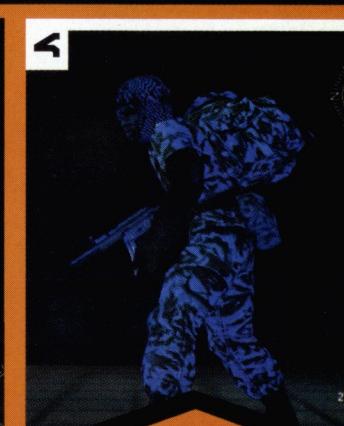
3

4

**NAME: DAVID JONES**
ROLE: EXPLOSIVES EXPERT

POCKETS FULL OF C4 and a handful of anti-tank mines make Jones the crew's demolitions man. Give him time to set charges and he'll take out any installation or bridge. Don't keep him in reserve purely for his explosive abilities, though - his silenced sub machine pistol and shotgun make him an excellent aide in a firefight.

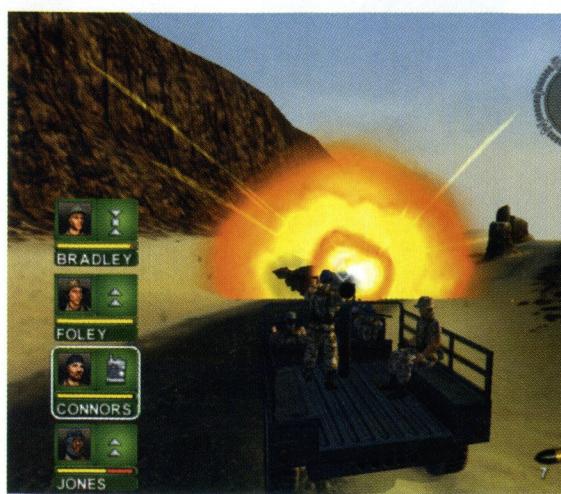
4



↑ "I'm not going in first. You go. I'll cover you... Honest... Please?"



↑ Babysit a scientist as he disarms some warheads in an Iraqi factory. Keep your sniper primed.



↑ Only one mission makes use of this brilliant attack vehicle.

» rescue and revive him by applying a medikit before he finally gives up his dog tags. Not only does it give you some margin for error, it also encourages you to rescue your boys to get them back into the fight.

The AI of your team is solidly dependable, which isn't such a major achievement considering the simplicity of their assigned orders - follow me, stay here, fire at will, stand there and face that direction. However, it's an easy to use and it's a workable system. When you give your men an area to cover, they do it admirably, often taking down infantry that you have yet to spot yourself. They tell you what's happening too, from gratifying shouts of "Infantry sighted" and "Target down" to the terrifying "Armour ahead" and the dreaded "Meeeeedddiiiiiccc!"

Along with the command system, everything about *Desert Storm* is a little basic and threadbare. Each of the 15 missions has at most four objectives and involves nothing more complicated than

reaching a certain waypoint or laying waste to a number of enemy forces and resources. But, crucially, what's been included actually works, which makes for something far more entertaining than a game full of ambitious, but poorly executed, ideas.

This is a console game, free from the complicated, convoluted trappings associated with sim-heavy PC titles. Easy to pick up and play, you can burn away several hours at a time or just dip into it for a swift gaming session inbetween snacks. Thankfully, there's no quick save option to make things too easy. Instead, you're given two saves per level to use when you see fit. It may sound like a raw deal, but it's tough love. By monitoring your progress on the maps, you can gauge when best to record your efforts. Two saves is enough to keep the tension up yet still avoid cheap, artificial stress created by a game that forces you back to the start when you die.

Speaking of tension, there are some genuinely fearsome moments in *Desert*



TOOLS OF THE TRADE ➤ A big, fat arsenal

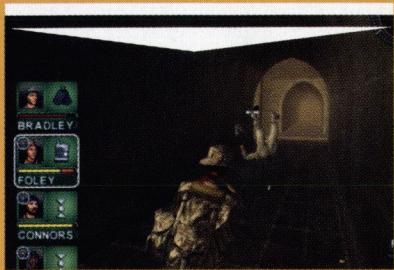
GRENADES 1

BESIDES THE BOG standard green pineapple (the best way to clear a room full of enemies) you've got smoke canisters that let you escape across open ground by blocking lines of sight.



PISTOLS 2

EACH SOLDIER PACKS a handgun. A last resort, pistols are whipped out when your rifle finally chugs out of ammo. They provide decent protection, but need to be reloaded often.



KNIVES 3

USEFUL ONLY FOR stealth kills. If you can creep up on someone from the rear without being detected, then you can use your blade for a silent kill, and receive a stealth bonus.



► BONUS INFO

► THE TEAM WORKS

Four-player mode is entertaining, but the draw distance is abysmal. Provided that you don't descend into the mess of bickering that we did (more ASS than SAS), you should do just fine. Two-player mode is far prettier and clearer, allowing for more coherent co-operative play. It's damn good at times, but it also makes you pine for some System Link options.

► ACCENT EMERGENCY

There are two teams of crack troops to choose from: the US Delta Force or Team SAS. Gamewise, the only difference this makes is to the accents that crackle across your radio throughout the game. Hearing a northern accent from Team SAS makes a refreshing change from hearing American voices in almost every video game, ever.

► EASY/NORMAL/HELL

There are three difficulty modes to choose from at the beginning of the Desert Storm Campaign. The only major difference between these modes during play, as far as we found, is that hits deplete more energy. In Easy mode, it's possible to stand off against waves of attacks and the bullets barely dent your health. Hard mode, however, sends you diving for cover at the mere sight of their trigger fingers.

AIR SUPPORT 4

USING EITHER AN infrared targeting device or a radio unit, it's possible to designate a target for an air strike. Be sure to retire to a safe distance as the payloads are devastating.



RIFLES 5

EACH CHARACTER carries a different gun, from heavy guns to silenced pistols. Get your hands on an AK-47 - it's one of the few weapons that can be fired from the hip.



EXPLOSIVES 6

C4 IS A GUARANTEED way to destroy your targets, from tank traps to SAM sites. You can even slap it on a tank, if you're brave enough to sneak up on one.



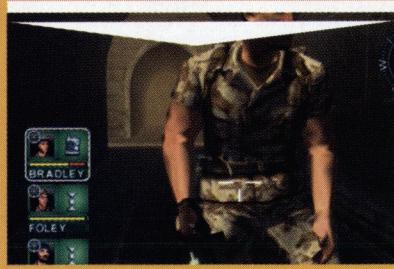
ANTI-ARMOUR 7

YOU'LL NEED EITHER a LAW or an RPG (both one-shot, shoulder-fired rockets) in order to wipe out a tank or gunship. Get Connors to do it - he rarely misses his target.



MEDKITS 8

EQUIP ONE OF these to heal your wounds, or apply it to your injured team mates. Frequent use gives you medic experience, which translates into more health restored.



VEHICLES 9

CRIMINALLY, THERE are only two missions that use vehicles - a jeep and a tank. Both accommodate your squad and both feature a missile launcher and machine-gun turret.



DESERT STORM PLAYS MORE LIKE A TENSE TACTICAL SHOOTER THAN A PURELY STRATEGIC CAMPAIGN

➤ *Storm*, usually whenever the enemy wheels out its big guns. A tank is a truly frightening sight, especially when it catches you in the open. Spotting a Russian-made tank turret rotating in your direction invokes a sense of panic that can only be matched by accidentally getting into the bed of your girlfriend's parents. Just one shot can wipe out your entire squad along with 30 minutes of considered teamwork. Next time round, you'll learn the value of scouting ahead to insure against such pratfalls.

So, as the bullets are zinging over your head, and an imposing Iraqi whirlybird ("Gunship Ahead!") looms in the distance,

what features of *Desert Storm* (other than sand in your rations) will spoil your enjoyment of the action?

Well, despite the alleged realism, there are lots of places where an infinite number of enemies spawn. Quartets of guards pouring out of barracks every 30 seconds seriously deflates the sense of achievement of locking down and securing an area.

As with *GoldenEye* on Nintendo 64, you have to 'cancel' the spawn point by entering the area of origin. So instead of craftily taking out guards with some clever teamwork, you may as well risk a man or two by charging into the spawn zone, then rescue them during an after-

action mop-up. It's a self-defeating and lazy bit of game design.

Other than that, the enemy AI can be bit duff, although not unfairly so. Sometimes you'll be having an elaborate firefight right next to a bunch of guards who won't react until you wander round a corner to trigger them. Again, it just detracts from the sense of immersion.

A trio of the middle levels are beset by a swirling sandstorm, which is completely plausible but annoying visually. The view is obscured every two seconds or so and it becomes irritating after several minutes. Soldier through these three missions, ➤

➤ MEDAL OF HONOUR
The end of each mission delivers a comprehensive, stat-ridden rundown and promotes squad members by merit. You also grow more experienced with favoured weapons and are awarded medals (Conspicuous Gallantry, Distinguished Conduct) for especially brave acts. The legendary Victoria Cross can only be earned on the Hard setting.



↑ Your troops are, for the most part, reliable. Here, Connors takes out a tank all by himself, while you watch and nod sagely, like any good leader.

"TANKS ARE TERRIFYING, ESPECIALLY IF ONE CATCHES YOU OUT IN THE OPEN"

» BONUS INFO

» WAR SONGS
The musical score in *Desert Storm* is very atmospheric, full of tense and moody orchestral stuff. But it does grate after a while, so you may want to make use of the brilliant custom option that allows you to play tunes ripped to the hard disk. Our own personal choice was a bit of *Protection*-era *Massive Attack*, and the first *Regular Fries* album. Maybe a bit of chill out to take off that homicidal edge? Some Paul Simon to cheer up proceedings? Let us know what tunes you decide to defend the freedom of the first world by. Email us at staff@oxm.com.au.

» BONUS INFO

» JOIN THE ARMY
Up to four players can take part in a mission at the same time, but you're restricted to just one tally. There's no link-up and no online play. Originally, it was mooted that extra players would be able to join the action simply by pressing Start on another controller and the screen would split accordingly to allow for some seamless multiplayer backup. While this never materialised, it's possible to use any save file with any number of players. So a save from a one-player game can be used as a starting point for a multiplayer session with mates.

» however, and you'll get access to the later, better, blue sky stages. They're some of the best missions in the game and the final four efforts, including a daring frontal assault on the fortress of General Aziz, are excellent.

With *Splinter Cell* (see page 040) on the way, *Conflict: Desert Storm* looks decidedly last-gen by comparison, mostly thanks to the uninspiring visuals and unchanging mission objectives. As an entry point to this style of gaming, however, it's superb – neither too demanding nor too patronising.

So when you aim your cursor over a patrolling guard in the distance, your bullets will hit home after the trigger squeeze, and he'll drop. And your squad, despite having occasional numbskull moments, can be left to fend for themselves in a majority of situations, laying down dependable cover fire and healing their own wounds.

In a world of games swamped with rampantly rubbish AI and collision detection, these are the kinds of dependable virtues that help make *Desert Storm* fun, despite its simplistic exterior. It's a thinking man's shoot-'em-up, ideal for those who don't want their combat too cerebral, or who like their action to have a little breathing space between the graphical va-va-voom. It's solid, enjoyable and accessible, and it's the best game of this type you can get on Xbox.

XBOX THE VERDICT

POWER

A decent representation of desert warfare, but levels and visuals are basic. Could do better.

STYLE

Sparse and bland. Some authentic weapon and vehicle detail but overall, still limited.

IMMERSION

Re-spawning enemies and duff AI tarnish an otherwise entertaining and absorbing experience.

LIFESPAN

Fifteen missions provide substantial play time if you're willing to approach them with care.



GOOD POINTS

SIMPLE, BUT IN A GOOD WAY
DEPENDABLE
TEAM-MATES
MAKES FOR GOOD MULTIPLAYING.



BAD POINTS

SOME SAPPY ENEMY BEHAVIOUR
PLAIN GRAPHICS.

SUMMARY

A basic, but entertaining tactical shooter. It won't win any medals, but will provide some quality war stories.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

8.0 // 10

» PREVIOUSLY: Interview - Issue 06, page 058

» COMING SOON: Hints & Tips - Issue 08





▲ A painful fight, granted, but at least they're making light of the situation...

Another round of medieval fighting, but it's top fun. One thing - why can't ancient warriors just get on?

BARBARIAN

WORDS: JON ATTAWAY

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: SAFFIRE
PUBLISHER: TITUS GAMES
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 6
PLAYERS: 1-4
WEBSITE:
WWW.TITUSGAMES.COM/BARBARIAN

THE BRIEF

FOUR-PLAYER fantasy fighting game (very) loosely based on the classic 8-bit game *Barbarian*.

ANY MENTION OF *Barbarian* - the original version, which came out on the old 8-bit computers in the '80s - is enough to produce a significant pang of nostalgia in many old-fart gamers, ourselves included.

The game is as fondly remembered for its gameplay as it is for its cover, which featured Wolf from *Gladiators* and the scantily-clad Maria Whittaker. The decapitation move, ended by a dwarf kicking the severed head, deserves a place in the gaming hall of fame.

Barbarian on Xbox doesn't have too much in common with its ancestor; it has far more in common with the two recent *Power Stone* games on Dreamcast - not a bad place to take inspiration from, in our opinion. There's even a spot of *Dead Or Alive 3* (Issue 01, 8.5) thrown in, too. For a muscular peasant, the eponymous barbarian Dagan has chosen his influences well, and the result is a frantic beat-'em-up that's surprisingly deep and enjoyable.

The action takes place in picturesque environments such as ice floes, castles and ancient ruins, with several hidden areas to find in each one. For instance, knocking an opponent over the edge of the castle turret triggers a change of scene with the fight continuing on the ground below. Guiding fighters through several different scenarios is as fun here as in *DOA3*.

It's the fighting action itself that echoes *Power Stone*. Each level is chock full of items like barrels, poles and swordfish that can be picked up and used against foes. You can also swing from overhead gantries, giving enemies below a proper shoeing.

The interactivity of the various environments gives the game a splendid bar brawl feel. There's something very satisfying about clonking people around the head with a freshly uprooted tree.

When you're not using objects, the purer combat is pretty good. Each fighter has eight combos (see *Combo Deal*, page 091), and once each one is learnt, a smidgen of strategy emerges from the chaos.

Because each combo has a certain effect on the opposition (or you), using the right one in the right situation can make a real difference to the outcome of a fight, especially during busier bouts. All of this means that there's more depth to *Barbarian* than is apparent during first plays.

You'd think that interactive arenas and a simple-but-clever combo system would be enough, but there's also a magic system. Successfully executing combos, throws, counters or just smacking someone with an object results in magic runes being awarded. These trinkets fill up a magic meter, and when

COMBO DEAL >> No fries on these vicious moves



ONE OF THE STRENGTHS of *Barbarian* is its combo system, which enables a skilled player to manage fights more effectively. Besides two simple three-hit combos (weak and strong), each fighter has six combos that can be very useful indeed. Here they are:



>> STUN COMBO

PRESS THIS:

WHY SHOULD I? This combo stuns your opponent, giving you valuable breathing space.



>> PUSHBACK COMBO

PRESS THIS:

WHY SHOULD I? Pushing one enemy away lets you concentrate on fighting another.



>> QUICK COMBO

PRESS THIS:

WHY SHOULD I? It's so quick, meaning you can juggle multiple enemies more easily.



>> MAGIC COMBO

PRESS THIS:

WHY SHOULD I? Using this combo fills up your magic meter quicker than normal moves.



>> LEAK COMBO

PRESS THIS:

WHY SHOULD I? This combo damages your enemy's energy bar even if he or she is blocking.



>> POP-UP COMBO

PRESS THIS:

WHY SHOULD I? Your victim is launched into the air and you can then hit them on the way down.

>> BONUS INFO

>> DO THE MASH
The voice-over man who tells the story sounds like the guy from the excellent song *Monster Mash*, by Bobby 'Boris' Pickett. You know the one: "I was working in the lab, late one night..."

>> OUT OF MY SKULL
The intrusiveness of the loading screens is lessened by the ability to move a laughing skull around the screen with the Left thumbstick, keeping you occupied for seconds at a time.

>> IT'S BEHIND YOU
Those of you with surround sound will notice tonnes of great background effects when playing *Barbarian*. Wood creaks behind you when playing on the level with the boat, for example. It's very neat indeed.



↑ The glowing green bits show that Stitch is powered up.



↑ A timely use of magic can end a fight quickly. And it looks good.

WITH STORIES BRANCHING IN PLACES,
THIS HAS GENUINE REPLAY VALUE

There are still more good ideas. Every character has a story-framed Quest mode, which sees him or her travelling the world of *Barbarian*, facing off against other characters before meeting their ultimate foe. But it's not just a series of identical, one-on-one, bread and butter scraps.

Some bouts include multiple opponents, making fights even more frantic as the player tries to deal with two or three attackers at

once. In others, your opponent might have a regenerating energy bar, or your character might be poisoned. Tweaking the format like this lends variety to the fights, and with each character's story branching in places, this is a game with genuine replay value.

Another welcome addition during the Quest mode is a simple RPG-style power-up system. As you progress, points are awarded that can be used to improve your skills -

making your block more effective, for example, or making your magic meter fill quicker. Even better, you can use them to buy entirely new skills, like a double jump.

Sadly though, there are a few niggles that prevent *Barbarian* from being a truly royal rumble. As a whole, the game feels just a little bit untidy.

The block function isn't as sturdy or immediate as it needs to be: it's all

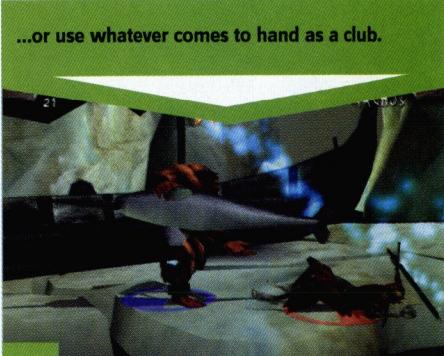


P-P-PICK UP A SWORDFISH >> When hand-to-hand combat just won't do

The B button comes in very handy during bouts, as it lets you interact with the environment to great effect. Using one of three techniques can really help you out in a tricky situation, or contribute crucially to the final winning moves of a bout.



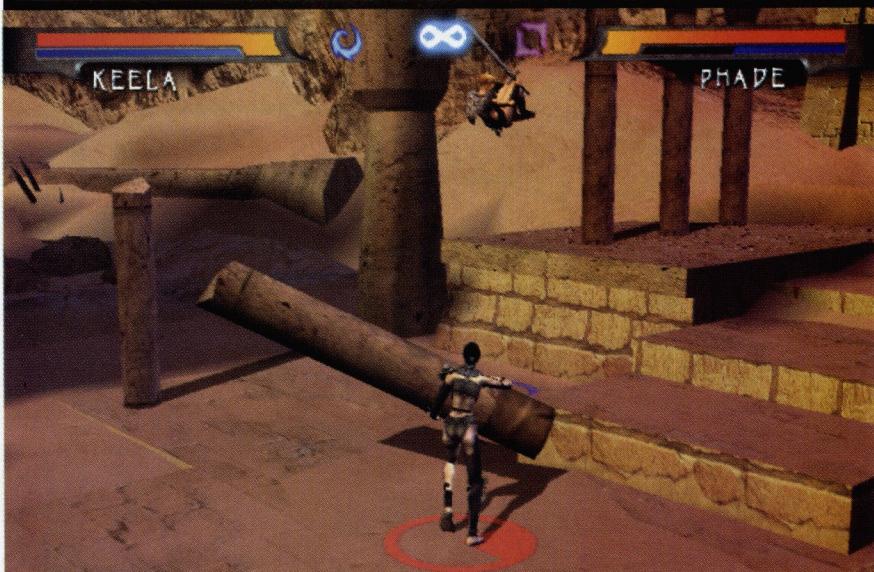
Throw an opponent using the grab button...



...or use whatever comes to hand as a club.



Swinging from things can get you out of trouble.



Smack opponents with huge lumps of scenery? Don't mind if we do.



Lighting effects are splashed around with gay abandon.



Hit someone off the turret and you see this.



Four-player battles can be hard to follow.

"THERE ARE PLENTY OF THINGS TO LIKE ABOUT THIS GAME... IT HAS GREAT IDEAS"

» too easy to take a pummelling when you feel you should have blocked the onslaught.

The game can also be very tough, especially when facing multiple enemies. Even with a decent combo knowledge, surviving several armed nutters attacking you in a corner can be extremely hard.

Thrown objects and magic attacks are also unfairly difficult to avoid at times. All of these mean it can often take lots of attempts to beat opponents towards the end of the Quest mode.

This toughness wouldn't be so much of an irritant if you could dive straight in and have another go after dying. But for some reason, the game demands that you sit and watch while the Quest screen loads again, before then reloading the level you were just playing. It's totally unnecessary.

The only other problem is that the game is a bit confusing when there are more than three fighters giving it some on the screen. The frantic nature of the game does mean that the action can feel a bit random and slapdash when the play area gets crowded. A good knowledge of the different combos and their effects does minimise this, however. It pays to learn.

But there are plenty of things to like about *Barbarian*, a game that adds some great ideas of its own to the appealing *Power Stone* template. It's not a precise, intricate fighter like *Dead Or Alive 3*, but then it doesn't want to be.

If a chaotic, no-holds-barred multiplayer brawl sounds like fun to you, then you'll find yourself having plenty of it with this.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Solid, rather than spectacular visuals. But why the pointless loading screens?

STYLE

Some of the backgrounds are great, and surround sound is well used. Poor presentation, though.

IMMERSION

The variety of tactics keeps you playing, and multiplayer is frequently a hoot.

LIFESPAN

Different characters and branching stories offer replay value, but the arcade gameplay won't last forever.

GOOD POINTS

- + EXCELLENT BRAWL FEEL
- + PLENTY OF VARIETY
- + EXPLORING ARENAS IS LOTS OF FUN

BAD POINTS

- BLOCKING DOESN'T SEEM QUITE RIGHT
- MULTIPLAYER CAN GET A BIT CONFUSING

SUMMARY

A solid, playable arcade beat-'em-up with lots of good ideas, some large weapons and a fat dollop of fantasy lore.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

7.4 // 10

» PREVIOUSLY: This is our first brush with *Barbarian*

» COMING SOON: Hints & cheats



LORD OF THE RINGS

FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

EXCLUSIVELY PREVIEWED IN...

PC GAMES
addict

LOOK FOR ISSUE 3 OF AUSTRALIA'S BEST PC GAMES MAG
AT YOUR NEWSAGENT **SEPT 18**

REVIEWS DIRECTORY

Dilute reviews in water and boil the resultant solution *et voila* - the essence of game assessment is created



THE XBOX GAMES

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 05
TYPE: Football
"A return to form for the franchise... the only footy game you need!"
SCORE: 8.7

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2003

REVIEWED: Issue 04
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Baseball
"A fine sim of a (literally) very hit-and-miss sport!"
SCORE: 7.0

ARCTIC THUNDER

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Racing
"A disgraceful excuse for an Xbox game... limp and lifeless to play"
SCORE: 2.4

AZURIK: RISE OF PERATHIA

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Action/adventure
"A colourful but underwhelming fantasy action adventure"
SCORE: 3.6

BATMAN: VENGEANCE

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Action/adventure
"Too easy, too samey and nothing new... Bat-lore heavy but has no replay value!"
SCORE: 6.8

BLOOD OMEN 2

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Action/adventure
"Linear gameplay dampens the otherwise vamped-up action"
SCORE: 8.5

BLOOD WAKE

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 02
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Racing/action
"Shoddy and flawed... but blasting up those little boats is just so much fun!"
SCORE: 7.4

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

REVIEWED: Issue 04
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 03, 04
TYPE: Action/adventure

"Captures the essence of the TV series and good enough to entertain non-viewers"
SCORE: 8.9

BURNOUT

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 05
TYPE: Racing
"A great arcade racer that delivers a enjoyably massive dose of testosterotainment!"
SCORE: 8.3

CIRCUS MAXIMUS

REVIEWED: Issue 05
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Issue 06
TYPE: Racing
"A sub-standard, gimmick-driven chariot racer lacking in almost every way!"
SCORE: 3.5

COMMANDOS 2: MEN OF COURAGE

REVIEWED: Issue 05
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Strategy
"Extremely tough... comprehensive and rewarding, but with some control issues"
SCORE: 6.9

CRASH

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Driving
"Instant, lo-fi, demolition derby fun for the few hours that it lasts!"
SCORE: 6.6

CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 05
TYPE: Platform
"One of the best cartoon worlds... but the bandicoot has no new tricks!"
SCORE: 7.1

DARK SUMMIT

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 05
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 01
TYPE: Snowboarding
"Half-hearted gameplay fleshed out with a pointless storybook aspect that adds nothing"
SCORE: 3.5

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 02
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 01
TYPE: BMXing
"Pulling tricks is fun... poor controls spoil the experience"
SCORE: 7.3

DAVID BECKHAM SOCCER

REVIEWED: Issue 04
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Football
"Outdated footy action that should be left alone, even by Becks fans!"
SCORE: 4.2

DEADLY SKIES

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Flight sim
"Not fast or exciting enough to fulfil that fighter pilot dream"
SCORE: 5.2

ENCLAVE

REVIEWED: Issue 06
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 07
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Slice-'em-up
"Involving, but the catalogue of annoyances becomes annoying"
SCORE: 5.8

ESPN WINTER X GAMES SNOWBOARDING 2

REVIEWED: Issue 05
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Snowboarding
"A decent boarding game... a bit clumsy to play... lots of features"
SCORE: 6.5

F1 2002

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Racing
"Solid, with everything a fan could want, but this is merely evolution, not revolution"
SCORE: 7.1

FUZION FRENZY

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 01
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Multiplayer/party
"More party pooper than party popper... too simple and repetitive"
SCORE: 4.5

GAUNTLET DARK LEGACY

REVIEWED: Issue 04
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Shooter
"A fun-free game that's sluggish and frequently confusing to play"
SCORE: 3.9

GEMNA ONIMUSHIA

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Action/adventure
"No-frills hack-n'-slash adventure... takes a while to crack... fun, but flawed"
SCORE: 7.0

GUN METAL

REVIEWED: Issue 04
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Flight/shooter
"Enjoyably intense robo-death combat - if you can stomach the difficult control method!"
SCORE: 8.3

GUN VALKYRIE

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 03
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Shoot-'em-up
"Not for the faint-hearted... intense, skilful action all the way"
SCORE: 8.2

HUNTER: THE RECKONING

REVIEWED: Issue 05
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 06
TYPE: Action/adventure
"A raucous, repetitive rumble... good, unclean fun but multiplayer is messy"
SCORE: 8.3

ISS 2

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 04
TYPE: Football
"Fans should treat this bitterly disappointing sequel with caution"
SCORE: 5.1

JAMES BOND 007 IN... AGENT UNDER FIRE

REVIEWED: Issue 05
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: FPS
"Makes you feel like Bond... super-stupid bad guy interaction"
SCORE: 6.3

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Beat-'em-up
"An excellently presented but scrappy punch-'em-up"
SCORE: 6.3

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

REVIEWED: Issue 05
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 07
TYPE: Wrestling
"Nostalgic appeal... causes some chuckles in multiplayer"
SCORE: 6.0

MAD DASH RACING

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 01
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Racing
"Just enough Mad, too much Dash and not enough Racing... frustrating in the extreme"
SCORE: 6.5

MAX PAYNE

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 05
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Action/shooter
"Stylish, repetitive and worthy of your time... bullet time is brilliant"
SCORE: 8.5

MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

REVIEWED: Issue 05
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 07
TYPE: Boxing
"Plenty of depth and strategy but sketchy and lacking a killer punch"
SCORE: 6.7

MX2002 FEAT. RICKY CARMICHAEL

REVIEWED: Issue 04
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 05
TYPE: Motocross
"A limp yet slightly enjoyable dirt biker with two-player mileage"
SCORE: 5.0



THE XBOX ELITE

These are the Xbox Elite - the select bunch of games that have scored 8.5 or more. You have our personal guarantee that each and every one of them is utterly fantastic, so make a special effort to sample their delights.



AMPED: FREESTYLE SNOWBOARDING

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 02
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 01
TYPE: Snowboarding
"Addictive, impressive and deep... a perfect landing"
SCORE: 8.7



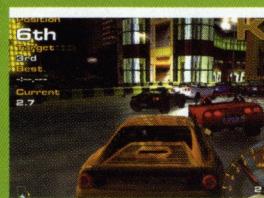
DEAD OR ALIVE 3

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 03
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 01
TYPE: Beat-'em-up
"Accessible, slick and as satisfying as any beat-'em-up... a visual benchmark"
SCORE: 8.5



JET SET RADIO FUTURE

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 05
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 02, 03
TYPE: Platform/skating
"Supremely playable... without doubt the most stylish game ever designed... huge, intricate levels"
SCORE: 9.0



PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 01
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 01
TYPE: Driving
"An epic racing game blending accuracy with entertainment"
SCORE: 8.9



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 03
TYPE: Skateboarding
"The biggest and best extreme sports title in the world"
SCORE: 8.8



REVIEWED: Issue 04
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 03
TYPE: Platform
"Highly enjoyable use of a beloved movie and comicbook licence. It simply crackles with superhero smarts"
SCORE: 8.8



HALO

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 02, 05
TYPE: First-person shooter
"Quite simply, a masterpiece and without question one of the best games ever made"
SCORE: 9.7



MOTO GP

REVIEWED: Issue 04
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Racing
"Hotly contested bike racing combined with a perfect control method make this a real winner"
SCORE: 8.7



RALLSPORT CHALLENGE

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 02
TYPE: Rallying
"Searingly fast rally game... best multiplayer racing game on Xbox... handsome as hell"
SCORE: 8.5

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 05
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 02
TYPE: Basketball
"A decent, playable basketball game - but not a brilliant one"
SCORE: 7.2

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Basketball
"B-ball's end-to-end flow is somehow distilled into tedium... top-notch presentation"
SCORE: 7.4

REVIEWED: Issue 04
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 01
TYPE: Action/adventure
"A flawed game that quickly becomes repetitive and boring"
SCORE: 4.9

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Ice Hockey
"Excellent multiplayer game with joyful passing and shooting"
SCORE: 8.2

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 01
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Ice Hockey
"Great-looking, polished and ultimately simple entertainment"
SCORE: 7.4

NIGHTCASTER

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Adventure/shooter
"Idea is good, but the execution isn't. Not wizard by any stretch"
SCORE: 3.7

ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 03
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Platform
"Fun to play and great to look at... brimming with character"
SCORE: 8.1

PIRATES: THE LEGEND OF BLACK KAT

REVIEWED: Issue 04
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Action/adventure
"Everything in this game feels lazy and uninspired"
SCORE: 7.1

PRISONER OF WAR

REVIEWED: Issue 06
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Puzzle/adventure
"Ambitious and intelligent strategy game marred by camera/control problems"
SCORE: 7.2

RED CARD

REVIEWED: Issue 04
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Football
"Innovative cartoon footy, but a

lack of decent CPU opponents"
SCORE: 7.5

SLAM TENNIS

REVIEWED: Issue 06
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Tennis
"Inconsistent, and with too many broken strings, but otherwise barely enjoyable"
SCORE: 6.7

SPY HUNTER

REVIEWED: Issue 04
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Driving/shooting
"Instantly enjoyable, completely superficial and often enjoyable"
SCORE: 6.7

SSX TRICKY

REVIEWED: Issue 05
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Snowboarding
"Fast and furious... needed souping up to become great on Xbox"
SCORE: 9.0

STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER

REVIEWED: Issue 05
PLAYABLE DEMO: Issue 06
GAME MOVIE: Issue 06
TYPE: Shoot 'em up
"A healthy dose of enjoyable space combat needing more action to truly shine"
SCORE: 7.4

STAR WARS: OBI-WAN

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a

GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Slice-'em-up
"Yet again, the Star Wars licence is wasted on a dodgy platformer. Oh the humanity!"
SCORE: 3.3

TD OVERDRIVE

REVIEWED: Issue 04
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 03, 05
TYPE: Racing
"Bad handling and a sad waste of a well known licence, but it's a fun no-brainer racing game.
SCORE: 6.8

TRANSWORLD SURF

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 05
TYPE: Surfing
"A lot to plough through... some really great water effects... not enough variation"
SCORE: 6.1

UFC: TAPOUT

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 04
TYPE: Beat-'em-up
"A brutal two-player fighter but a bit one-dimensional for singles"
SCORE: 9.0

WRECKLESS

REVIEWED: Issue 02
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 02
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 04
TYPE: Driving
"Awesome demonstration of what Xbox can do... but not enough game in it"
SCORE: 7.5

FIZZERS TO AVOID

CEL DAMAGE

PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 03
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 01
TYPE: Racing
"Looks dreamy and sharp, but extremely hectic gameplay makes for a terribly frustrating experience overall"

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS

PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Winter sports sim
"Pathetic effort at a sports anthology... a game stuck firmly in the Ice Age. What a sad waste of a great licence."

SHREK

PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 01
TYPE: Platform
"This cynical and opportunistic film tie-in is a plain and unrewarding platform game"

SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE

PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Driving
"A scabby game made bearable by its funny voices and fun two-player mode, but it's a right rip off of Crazy Taxi. Get that instead."

TEST DRIVE OFF-ROAD: WIDE OPEN

PLAYABLE DEMO: n/a
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: Driving
"The lack of vehicle/ground interaction will soon have total dieselheads sucking a tailpipe. Drab, mundane and unexciting."

What are your favourite games? Come up with your own Top 5 and mail it to us at staff@oxm.com.au



BO' SELECTA YOUR TOP SOUNDTRACKS



HAVE YOU MADE a custom soundtrack for your favourite Xbox game yet? Each month we'll be

printing your greatest playlists for the best Xbox games. All you have to do is email . The best soundtracks next month win an exclusive Xbox pin badge.

MOTO GP

Sean Mitchell has sent us his top five tracks for *Moto GP*. It's a thumping hip-hop soundtrack with a parental guidance logo slapped all over it.

1. WITHOUT ME (EMINEM)
2. COLD AS ICE (M.O.P.)
3. BREAK YA NECK (BUSTA RHYMES)
4. WHAT'S MY NAME (DMX)
5. DA GOODNESS (REDMAN)

AMPED

Peter Ward from the musical hotbed of Bexley sent us a very laid back soundtrack for *Amped*.

1. HAWAII FIVE-O (ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA)
2. ACE OF SPADES (MOTORHEAD)
3. CAN'T STOP ROCKIN' (ZZ TOP)
4. SCARFACE (PAUL ENGBERG)
5. FANFARE FOR THE COMMON MAN (EMERSON, LAKE AND PALMER)

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

This month's work experience buddy Colin Oakes offers his quintet of banging themes for *Project Gotham Racing*. He wins the chance to make Ben another cup of coffee. Milk and one, please, mate.

1. BY THE WAY (RED HOT CHILLI PEPPERS)
2. WAIT AND BLEED (SLIPKNOT)
3. 57 (BIFFY CLYRO)
4. PARABOLA (TOOL)
5. DEADSTAR (MUSE)



HINTS & CHEATS

HERE GOES...

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

ISSUE 04, 8.9

COMPLETE COMBO LISTING

Note: You need some energy in your purple power bar if you want to perform these moves. You can recharge the bar by killing enemies and collecting their souls.

COMBINATION ATTACK

Give your opponent no rest and no chance to fight back. Press X, then A, then A again.

SLAYER COMBO BOOST

A true slayer can channel inner Chi into a devastating finishing blow. Press X, then A, then hold down X.

SLAYER TRIPLE KICK

When Chi flows freely through the body, the flow of time itself can be changed. Double tap up on the Left thumbstick and then hold A.



↑ Stake with that, unholy hellbeast?

SLAYER GROUND SMASH

An opponent may be down, but the ground smash technique can kill them without the use of a stake. Hold the Right trigger, double tap down twice on the Left thumbstick and push X.

SUPER POWER PUNCH

An unstoppable attack that smashes even the toughest monster. Double tap up on the Left thumbstick, then press X.

SLAYER CYCLONE KICK

This technique allows the Slayer to strike in all directions at once. Quickly rotate the Left thumbstick in a full clockwise circle and then press A.

SLAYER SWEEP ATTACK

Sometimes the best offence is a

devastating defence. Hold the right trigger, double tap down on the Left thumbstick and press A.

ENCLAVE

ISSUE 06, 5.8

GAME DISC 07, PLAYABLE DEMO
GAME DISC 08, GAME MOVIE

INVINCIBILITY AND LEVEL SKIP

Pause the game and press, in turn, X, Y, X, X, Y and Y. You have to tap in a 1-2, 1-2-3-4 rhythm. A menu option will appear, giving you the choice to skip the current level or become invincible.



↑ Crack Enclave wide open right now.

PRISONER OF WAR

ISSUE 06, 7.2

GET YOUR STUFF BACK

On the first level, any items that are confiscated can be retrieved via the Scrounger at no extra cost to the player.

GUARD AVOIDANCE

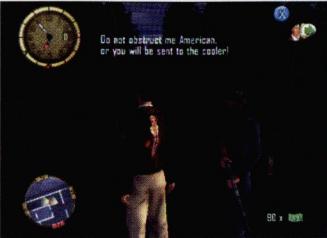
When spotted by guards, run into a building that you know is usually unguarded. Once inside, crouch behind furniture or hide underneath a bed and the guard will soon forget about you.

Bribing Guards

Certain guards in the game can be bribed if you have enough currency. Ask your fellow POWs at Stalag Luft and Colditz to find out which soldiers can be bought. If you can find the same guards on later levels, they can still be paid to perform tasks for you.

ITEM LOCATION

Collectible items remain in the same locations between Mission 2: Stalag Luft and Mission 4: Stalag Luft 2. They're also in the same places between Mission 3: Colditz and Mission 5: Colditz 2.



↑ Prison camp? Ooh, yes please, ducky.

INVISIBILITY CHEAT

Type FATTY at the Cheats menu then activate the cheat in the Specials menu. You'll be completely invisible to the enemy guards.

GUN METAL

ISSUE 04, 8.3

UNLOCK EVERY LEVEL

Enter the following sequence at the mission select screen: Click Left thumbstick, Black, Right trigger, click Right thumbstick, White, Left trigger.

MUSIC CHANGE

Enter the following sequence anywhere in the main menu to change the main title theme: Click Left thumbstick, click Left thumbstick, click Right thumbstick, click Right thumbstick, Left trigger, Right trigger.

SPOOF MISSION BRIEFINGS

Enter the following at the armoury screen before launching any of missions 1, 3, 6, 8, 9 & 14 to get a comedy mission brief: Left trigger, Left trigger, Right trigger, Right trigger, click Left thumbstick, click Right thumbstick.

SKIP CURRENT MISSION

Enter the following sequence at any time during gameplay (but not in the Pause menu) to skip to the next level: click Left thumbstick, White, White, Back, click Right thumbstick, White.



↑ Open every level on Gun Metal.

RALLISPORT CHALLENGE

ISSUE 01, 8.5
GAME DISC 04, PLAYABLE DEMO

UNLOCK DOWNHILL TRACKS

To instantly unlock all the downhill tracks in the game, simply name your



↑ Get all tracks with our codes.

driver Geronimo (this is a case sensitive entry).

UNLOCK ENDURANCE RACES

To instantly unlock the endurance races in the game, name your driver TheLongHaul (case sensitive).

UNLOCKABLE CARS

There are 25 basic cars in RalliSport Challenge. The first eight are unlocked from the start and the rest unlock as you are break through points barriers in Career Mode while clearing the different event levels: Expert, Classic and Unlimited.

EXPERT CARS (12,000 points needed)

Saab 9-3 T16 4x4
Opel Astra T16 4x4
Ford Focus Rallycross
Citroen Xsara Rallycross
Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 65
Subaru Impreza Hill Climb
Lancia Delta Integrale
Nissan Skyline

CLASSIC CARS (40,000 points needed)

Metro ER4
Peugeot 205 T16
Audi Quattro SI
Lancia Delta S4

UNLIMITED CARS (70,000 points needed)

Peugeot 405 T16 Hill Climb
Audi Quattro SI Hill Climb
Suzuki Grand Vitara PP Special
Toyota Tacoma Hill Climb

PIRATES: LEGEND OF BLACK KAT

ISSUE 03, 7.1

LOTS OF GOLD

To earn infinite gold, hold down



↑ There be buried treasure.

both triggers and enter the following button combination during play: B, click Right thumbstick, White, X, A, click Right thumbstick, Back, click Left thumbstick, Y, Black.

UPGRADE YOUR GALLEON

To trade in your standard galleon for the much more powerful Wind Dancer, hold down both triggers and enter the following combination during play: Black, B, click Right thumbstick, click Left thumbstick, A, X, click Right thumbstick, Back, White, Y.

GET ALL TREASURE CHEST KEYS

To receive all treasure chest keys in the game, hold both triggers and enter the following button combination during play: Y, Back, A, X, click Right thumbstick, White, click Left thumbstick, Black, B, click Left thumbstick.

MUSIC FROM SSX TRICKY

To unlock music from SSX Tricky, hold both triggers and enter the following button combination during play: White, A, B, Black, X, Y, click Left thumbstick, Back, click Right thumbstick, click Left thumbstick.

SPY HUNTER

ISSUE 03, 7.5

PLAY THE ORIGINAL SPY HUNTER GAME

To play a version of the original Spy Hunter arcade game, enter OGSPY as your spy name.



↑ Old Spy Hunter in 2002 game.

CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX

ISSUE 02, 7.1
GAME DISC 05, PLAYABLE DEMO

DIFFERENT ENDING

Collect all 46 gems during the game to see a better ending.

NEVER LOSE A LIFE

When you die, pause the game before the screen turns black. Select 'Warp Room' from the



↑ On track for the new ending.

pause menu. If successful, you will return to the warp room and will not lose a life!

GET BELLY FLOP POWER

To get this very handy skill, get the Red gem in the Bonzat Bonsai level, then make your way to the end gem.

FAKE WARP ZONE

In the level Crash And Burn, there's a warp zone over a big gap - don't jump into it. Instead, shoot it with the bazooka to earn yourself a gem.

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

ISSUE 03, 8.7
GAME DISC 05, GAME MOVIE



↑ All-Stars... the real deal.

UNLOCK EUROPEAN ALL-STARS

Win the World Cup with any European team to unlock the European All-Stars team.

UNLOCK AMERICAN ALL-STARS

Win the World Cup with a North or South American team to unlock the American All-Stars team.

UNLOCK AFRICAN ALL-STARS

Win the World Cup with any African team to unlock the African All-Stars team.

UNLOCK ASIAN ALL-STARS

Win the World Cup with an Asian Team to unlock the Asian All-Stars team.

UNLOCK WORLD ALL-STARS

Win the World Cup with any European, American, African and Asian team once you have all the All-Star teams to unlock a team of the World's greatest players.

YOUR OPINION

Remember the good old days when families would sit around the campfire playing *Tetris* on the Gameboy? They'd spend quality time together, telling stories about their favourite games of the day - *Spy Hunter*, *Barbarian* and others. Can you tell that this month, Your Opinion is on a nostalgia trip? We asked you to tell us what games you'd like to see updated for Xbox.

Call me an old S.O.B. Any of the *Manic Miner* or *Jet Set Willy* games would bring a tear to my old eye.
Big Gus,
via email

Elite, that was such a good game. You could lose yourself for hours in that thing.
Ryu,
via email

We should leave retro games alone, especially classic games. I played *Sim City* for hours on the good old Atari ST. The PC update was a load of rubbish. What we need is more new games and lots of imagination.
Amiles,
via email

I can't wait to see *ToeJam & Earl III* on Xbox. The original was an absolute classic back on the Mega Drive.
Fred D. Monkey,
via email

I would love to see an update of *Streets of Rage*. Imagine what they could do with the advanced power of Xbox!
Dynamite,
via email

Worms is the greatest! Everyone needs more worms on their Xbox.
Mwalker,
via email

Lode Runner. I wasted a good year or two of my youth on that game, and I'd be willing to do it again.
Kevin Cheung,
Official Australian Xbox Magazine

*O*bert* was one of the original platformers, they just don't make games like that any more.
Masterchiefo,
from the Forum

I always liked *Alex Kidd in Miracle World*, it's a little gem!
John Blunn,
Cardiff

It Came From the Desert on the Commodore 64 was a brilliant game. I think that giant radioactive ants deserve a place in modern Xbox games.
Auzdafluff,
from the Forum

NEXT MONTH'S TOPIC: There's a long wait before *Halo 2* arrives, and this leaves plenty of time to think of a good subtitle. Our best so far is *Halo 2: Bride of Master Chief*. We know that you can do better. Send your ideas via email to staff@oxm.com.au with 'Your Opinion' as the subject. Or send it to Your Opinion, Official Australian Xbox Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction NSW, 1355.



NEXT MONTH

In OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE
IT'S TIME FOR THE BIG TITLES TO COME OUT AND PLAY

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL

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THE THING

Scarer than *Silent Hill*? Find out in next month's review!

BLADE II

Forget the story: we just want all the cool fight scenes!

TONY HAWK 4

Can the reigning champion of action sports get any better?

**PLUS!
4 PLAYABLE DEMOS!**

Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller, Battle Engine Aquila, Hunter: The Reckoning
PLUS reviews of Mat Hoffman 2 (we really mean it this time!), Hitman 2, Street Hoops, and loads more!



OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE
OCTOBER 2002 ISSUE 07
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SPECIAL THANKS TO KRISTY SHEPPARD, LEIGH "CAMERAS MAKE ME NERVOUS" WHITE, RICHARD HIRST, AARON GIBSON, OWEN HUGHESMATT DAMON, TOKYOPIA, THE SNES LOVE ON SINGAPORE AIRLINES (QANTAS IS CRAP!), AND SINGAPORE SLINGS!

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DISC PRODUCTION

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DISTRIBUTION BY NDD
PRINTED IN AUSTRALIA BY PMP PRINT

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Derwent Howard Pty Ltd
Official Australian Xbox Magazine
Derwent Howard Publishing
Level 3, 59-75 Grafton Street
Bondi Junction NSW 2022
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Tel (02) 9386 4666
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Extreme velocity, violent vendettas – this is the future of racing. Take the wheel of a hovecraft that travels at over 1000km/h. Marvel over its customised weapons. Remind yourself before you turn the ignition...there are no second prizes.

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- Gamespy



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